MA'ARIFUL QUR'AN

A Comprehensive commentary on the Holy Quran

Volume 7

(Surah Luqman To Surah Al-Ahkaf)

By

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MA'ĀRIFUL-QUR'ĀN

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Volume 7

(Sūrah Luqmān, As-Sajdah, Al-Aḥzāb, Saba', Faṭir, Yā Sīn, Aṣ-Ṣaffāt, Ṣād, Az-zumar, Al-Mu'min, Ḥāmīm As-Sajdah, Shūrā, Az-Zukhruf, Aljāthiyah, Ad-Dukhān, Al-Aḥkāf)

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Preface

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

By the grace of Allah Almighty, the seventh volume of Ma'āriful-Qur'ān is now in the hands of the readers. But while presenting it to them, I am unable to suppress my sentiments of sorrow and grief on a shocking event that took place during the process of its completion. It was the sad demise of Professor Muḥammad Shamīm, who has been the vital spirit behind this project for about a decade. After completing the translation of the fifth volume, he had resumed his work on this seventh volume, the sixth volume being undertaken by Mr. Ishrat Ḥusain. He left Pakistan for USA on the request of his sons, so that they might look after his medical treatment. In spite of his deteriorating health during his stay in New York, he spared no effort to accomplish this volume. He worked day and night in his fervent zeal to serve the Holy Qur'ān up to his last breath, often ignoring that he was a heart patient. He started from surah Luqman and concluded Sūrah Mu'min on 7th March 2002. Immediately after he started Sūrah Ḥa Mīm As-Sajdah, he encountered a severe heart attack and, within a couple of days, passed away. *Innā lillāhī wā innā ilāihī rāji'ūn.* During his illness he used to express his desire to accomplish the work he had in hand, but a few days before his demise, he borrowed the words of the author of Ma'āriful-Qur'ān and said "I submit to Allah's will, because the Holy Qur'ān is not something to be finished, rather one should finish his life in the service of the Holy Qur'ān". Allah Ta'ālā has, perhaps, fulfilled his noble desire, and he consumed his life in carrying on this remarkable service of the Holy Book.

This seventh volume is thus appearing at a time when he is no more with us to see it. May Allah approve his sincere efforts and

bless him with eternal rewards in the Hereafter.

The translation from Sūrah Ḥā Mīm As-Sajdah was undertaken by my learned friend Mr. Shamshād Ṣiddiqī, except for sūrahs Ad-Dukhān and Aljāthiyah that are translated by Moulānā Aḥmad Khalīl 'Azīz of South Africa.

Another change that took place in the course of preparation of this volume is that the translation of the text of the Holy Qur'ān, as mentioned in the beginning of the first volume, was carried out by the joint effort of a committee, but when Professor Muḥammad Shamīm left for USA, the committee decided that the translation of the text of the Holy Qur'ān should be undertaken by me alone. Accordingly, I am responsible for the translation from Sūrah Al-Anbiyā' onwards, and I am pleased to say that Alḥamdulillāh the task has now been completed to the last Sūrah of the Holy Qur'ān. The translation of the eighth volume of the commentary is undertaken by Moulānā Aḥmad Khalīl 'Azīz of South Africa and is close to its completion.

I am extremely thankful to Mrs. Shamīm and her sons Mr. Shama'īl and Mr. Sadīm whose sincere efforts facilitated the preservation of the script of the book and its transmission to us. Acknowledgements are also due to Mr, Yousuf Noor, Mr. Isḥāq Noor, Mr. Yousuf Ghanī, Moulānā 'Abdullāh Memon, Mr. Rafat Ṣaghīr Fārooquī and Mr. Ibrāhīm Nafīs whose valuable assistance made it possible to present this volume. May Allah approve all these efforts and make it beneficial for the readers.

Muḥammad Taqi Usmānī
6.7.1424 A.H.

TRANSLITERATION SCHEME

Arabic Letter	Name of Letter		English Transliteration
ا	الف	-- Alif	a
ب	باء	-- bā	b
ت	تاء	-- tā	t
ث	ثاء	-- thā	th
ج	جيم	-- jīm	j
ح	حاء	-- ḥā	ḥ
خ	خاء	-- khā	kh
د	دال	-- dāl	d
ذ	ذال	-- dhāl	dh
ر	راء	-- rā	r
ز	زای	-- zā	z
س	سين	-- sīn	s
ش	شين	-- shīn	sh
ص	صاد	-- ṣād	ṣ
ض	ضاد	-- ḍād	ḍ
ط	طاء	-- ṭā	ṭ
ظ	ظاء	-- ẓā	ẓ
ع	عين	-- ‘ayn	‘
غ	غين	-- ghayn	gh
ف	فاء	-- fā	f
ق	قاف	-- qāf	q
ک	كاف	-- kāf	k
ل	لام	-- lām	l
م	ميم	-- mīm	m
ن	نون	-- nūn	n
ہ	هاء	-- hā	h
و	واؤ	-- wāw	w
ء	همزه	-- Hamzah	’
ی	ياء	-- yā	y

Short Vowels

	: Fatḥah	a
	: Kasrah	i
	: Ḍammah	u

Long Vowels

ا	:Shortened Alif	ā
آ	: Maddah Alif	ā
ی	: Maddah Yā	ī
ؤ	: Maddah Wāw	ū

Dipthongs

ای	: Alif and Yā	ay (also ai in some cases)
او اؤ	: Alif and Wāw	aw (also au in some cases)

Sūrah Luqmān

Sūrah Luqmān is Makkī. It has 34 Verses and 4 Sections

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 9

الٓمّٓ ﴿١﴾ تِلْكَ اٰيٰتُ الْكِتٰبِ الْحَكِيْمِ ﴿٢﴾ هُدًى وَّرَحْمَةً
لِّلْمُحْسِنِيْنَ ﴿٣﴾ الَّذِيْنَ يُقِيْمُوْنَ الصَّلٰوةَ وَيُؤْتُوْنَ الزَّكٰوةَ وَهُمْ
بِالْاٰخِرَةِ هُمْ يُوْقِنُوْنَ ﴿٤﴾ اُولٰٓئِكَ عَلٰى هُدًى مِّنْ رَّبِّهِمْ وَاُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ
الْمُفْلِحُوْنَ ﴿٥﴾ وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يَّشْتَرِيْ لَهْوَ الْحَدِيْثِ لِيُضِلَّ عَنْ
سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ وَّيَتَّخِذَهَا هُزُوًا اُولٰٓئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مُّهِيْنٌ
﴿٦﴾ وَاِذَا تُتْلٰى عَلَيْهِ اٰيٰتُنَا وَلّٰى مُسْتَكْبِرًا كَاَنْ لَّمْ يَسْمَعْهَا كَاَنَّ فِيْٓ
اُذُنَيْهِ وَقْرًا فَبَشِّرْهُ بِعَذَابٍ اَلِيْمٍ ﴿٧﴾ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا
الصّٰلِحٰتِ لَهُمْ جَنّٰتُ النَّعِيْمِ ﴿٨﴾ خٰلِدِيْنَ فِيْهَا وَعْدَ اللّٰهِ حَقًّا
وَهُوَ الْعَزِيْزُ الْحَكِيْمُ ﴿٩﴾

Alif Lām Mīm. [1] **These are verses of the Wise Book,** [2] **a guidance and mercy for those good in deeds** [3] **who are steadfast in Ṣalāh and who pay Zakāh and do have faith in the Hereafter.** [4] **It is these who are on guidance given by their Lord, and it is just these who are successful.** [5]

And from among the people, there is he who buys the distracting amusement of things, so that he, being

devoid of knowledge, may mislead (people) from the Way of Allah and make a mockery of it. Such people are the ones for whom there is a disgraceful punishment. [6]

And when Our verses are recited to him, he turns away in arrogance as if he did not hear them, as if there is heaviness in his ears. So give him the 'good' news of a painful punishment. [7]

Surely, those who believe and do righteous deeds, for them there are gardens of bliss [8] **where they shall live forever - an absolute promise of Allah. And He is the Mighty, the Wise.** [9]

Commentary

The words: يُؤْتُوْنَ الزَّكٰوة (pay Zakāh) in Verse 4 carry the injunction of Zakāh, although the verse is Makkī.. This tells us that the original injunction of Zakāh had already been revealed before Hijrah, right there in Makkah al-Mu'aẓẓamah. As for the popular assumption that the injunction of Zakāh was enforced in the second year of Hijrah, it refers to the arrangement of fixing its *nisāb* (threshold), providing details of obligatory amount to be paid, collecting and disbursing it on authorized heads by the Islāmic government. This was done in the second year of Hijrah.

Ibn Kathīr while commenting on verse 20 of Sūrah Al-Muzzammil: اَقِيْمُوا الصَّلٰوةَ وَاٰتُوا الزَّكٰوةَ (Establish Ṣalāh and pay Zakāh - 73:20) has arrived at the same conclusion, because Sūrah Al-Muzzammil as one of the Makkī Sūrahs was revealed during the very initial period of the revelation of the Qur'ān. This tells us that the way Ṣalāh and Zakāh have been described mostly side by side in the verses of the Qur'ān, its obligation had also taken effect side by side. Allah knows best.

The word: اشتراء (*ishtirā'*) in: وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يَّشْتَرِىْ لَهْوَالْحَدِيْثِ (And from among the people who buys the distracting amusement of things - 31:6) literally means 'to buy.' And on occasions, the same word is used in the sense of 'doing an act instead of another' - as in: اُولٰٓئِكَ الَّذِيْنَ اشْتَرَوُا الضَّلٰلَةَ بِالْهُدٰى (These are the people who have bought error at the price of guidance - 2:16, 2:175) and in some other verses.

The Cause of Revelation

This verse was revealed because of a particular event relating to Naḍr Ibn Ḥārith. He was one of the top businessmen from among the *Mushriks*

of Makkah who used to travel to different countries in connection with his business. Once he bought and brought back a collection of historical stories featuring Cyrus and other Persian kings from Iran. Thus armed, he said to the Quraish of Makkah: "Muḥammad ﷺ tells you the stories of the people of 'Ād and Thamūd and others. I shall tell you better stories, those of Rustam, Isfandyār and other kings of Persia. They started listening to his stories eagerly simply because they contained no lessons to learn and no work to do. It was nothing but some delicious stories. Because of these, many *Mushriks* who had some measure of interest in the Divine Word because of its miraculous nature, rather listened to it stealthily, found an excuse to draw away from the Qur'ān. (ذکره فی الروح عن اسباب النزول للواحدی و مقاتل و ذکر نحوه فی الدر المنثور بروایة البیهقی)

And according to a narration of Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ in Ad-Durr al-Manthūr, the businessman mentioned above had brought in a singing bondwoman he bought in a foreign country. It was through her that he devised a plan to stop people from listening to the Qur'ān. When he found anyone intending to go and listen to the Qu'ān, he would have him hear his bondwoman sing before him. He used to say: 'Muḥammad ﷺ makes you listen to the Qur'ān, then goes on to ask you to pray and fast which make life difficult for you. Come, you listen to this music and enjoy the fun.'

The verse of the Qur'ān being referred to here was revealed in relation to this very event. Here, the *ishtirā'* (buying) of *lahw al-ḥadīth* (the distracting amusement of things) means either those tales of the Persian kings, or this singing bondwoman. In terms of the event in the background of the revelation, the word: اِشْتِرَاء (*ishtirā'*) has been used in the real sense for buying.

And in terms of the general sense of لَهْوَالْحَدِیْث (*lahw al-ḥadīth*: the distracting amusement of things) being enunciated later, the word: اِشْتِرَاء (*ishtirā'*) is also in its general sense at this place, that is, to opt for something instead of something else. This includes the buying of things of '*lahw*' (amusement) as well.

As for the word: حَدِیْث (*ḥadīth*) in لَهْوَالْحَدِیْث (*lahw al-ḥadīth*), it is there in the sense of tales told and things said and done. Then the word '*lahw*' itself literally means to become heedless. In other words, things that make

one become negligent of what must be done are also called *'lahw.'* Then there are occasions when things that bring no worthwhile benefit, rather serve as pastime or entertainment only, are also referred to as لَهْو *'lahw.'*

As regards the meaning and exegetical explanation of the expression: لَهْوَالْحَدِيْث (*lahw al-ḥadīth*: distracting amusement of things - 4) in the cited verse, sayings of commentators differ. In a narration of Sayyidnā Ibn Mas'ūd, Ibn 'Abbās and Jābir رضی اللّٰہ عنهم اجمعين, it has been explained as music, vocal or instrumental (reported and verified by al-Ḥākim, and al-Baihaqī in ash-Shu'ab).

And in the view of the majority of Ṣaḥābah, Tābi'īn and commentators at large, the expression: لَهْوَالْحَدِيْث (*lahw al-ḥadīth:* the distracting amusement of things) applies generally to everything which makes one fall into a state of heedlessness as to the remembrance and worship of Allah. Included therein is music accompanied by instruments, and obscene or absurd fictional narratives as well. Imām al-Bukhārī in his book, al-'Adab al-Mufrad, and al-Baihaqī in his Sunan have both elected to go by this Tafsīr. Al-Bukhārī has said:

لَهْوَالْحَدِيْثِ هُوَالْغِنَاءُ وَاَشْبَاهُه

'Lahw al-ḥadīth' means playing music and things similar to it (which make one heedless to the worship of Allah).

And it appears in Sunan al-Baihaqī that opting for or buying the distracting amusement of things (اِشْتِرَاء لَهْوَالْحَدِيْث : *ishtirā' lahw al-ḥadīth*) means buying a bondman or bondwoman who sings and plays instruments, or buying similar other immodest things which make one heedless to the remembrance of Allah. Ibn Jarīr has also taken to this general sense. The same generality is proved by a narration of Tirmidhī where the Holy Prophet ﷺ has been reported to have said, 'Do not buy or sell singing bondwomen,' after which he said, مثل هذا انزلت هذه الاية وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يَّشْتَرِىْ (About such things this verse [i.e. verse 6 which is under discussion] was revealed)

Islamic Legal Injunctions of لَهْو وَلَعِب *'Lahw wa La'ib'* (play and game) and its Equipment

Full details of these injunctions supported by proofs from the Qur'ān and Sunnah have been provided in a treatise contained in احكام القران

(Aḥkām ul-Qur'ān) written by this humble writer. It also carries an equally detailed discussion on music and musical instruments in the light of the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth along with the sayings of Muslim jurists and mystics. This treatise in Arabic* has been published in volume V of Aḥkām ul-Qur'ān. Learned readers may consult it at their discretion. A gist is being given here for others interested in the subject.

First of all, it should be borne in mind wherever the Qur'ān has mentioned *Lahw* and *La'ib,* it is in the context of its disparagement and degradation, the lowest degree of which is *karāhah* (repugnance or reprehensibility) (Rūḥ ul-M'ānī and al-Kashshāf) and the cited verse is open and clear in declaring it as vice.

And in Kitābul-Jihād of al-Ḥākim's Mustadrak, it has been reported by Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ﷺ that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said:

كُلُّ شَىْءٍ مِّنْ لَهْوِ الدُّنْيَا بَاطِلٌ اِلاَّ ثَلٰثة: اِنْتِضَالُكَ بِقَوْسِكَ وَتَادِيْبُكَ لِفَرَسِكَ، وَمُلاَعَبَتُكَ لِاَهْلِكَ فَاِنَّهُنَّ مِنَ الْحَقِّ

> Every Lahw (play) of the world is false except three things: (1) that you play with your bow and arrow (2) and that you play while training your horse and (3) that you play with your wife - because these are among acceptable rights.

(Ḥākim has said that this Ḥadīth is Ṣaḥīḥ on the condition set forth by Muslim. But, adh-Dhahabī and others have not accepted it as *muttaṣil,* (of an uninterrupted chain) Instead, he calls it a *mursal* (of an interrupted chain). But, in the sight of the majority of Ḥadīth experts, a *mursal* hadith is also authentic).

In this Ḥadīth, every *'lahw'* or play has been declared as false with the exception of three. These, in reality, are just not included under the definition of *'lahw'* because *'lahw'* is supposed to be something in which there is no worthwhile religious or worldly benefit. And these three things are worthwhile. Many religious and worldly advantages are attached with them. As for archery and training of horses, they are part of the preparation for Jihād. Then, playfulness with one's wife serves the purpose of procreation. That they have been named as *'lahw'* is simply because of outward similarity. In terms of reality, they are just not included under *'lahw.'* Similarly, other than these three, there are many things that yield religious or worldly benefit while, seen outwardly, they are supposed to be *'lahw'* or play. These too have been rated as

permissible in other narrations of Ḥadīth; in fact, some of these have been declared to be commendable. Relevant detail will follow.

In gist, the doing of things which are *'lahw,'* in real terms, that is, in which there is no benefit, neither religious nor worldly, are all necessarily blameworthy and *makrūh* (repugnant, reprehensible) after all. Then, there are details about them. Some reach the extent of *kufr* (infidelity). Others are explicitly *ḥarām* (forbidden) the lowest degree of which is their being *makrūh tanzīhī*, that is, counter to the preferred choice (*khilāf al-awlā*). No *'lahw,'* which really qualifies as *'lahw,'* is exempt from it. As for the plays exempted in Ḥadīth, they just do not fall under the definition of *'lahw'* as it has been already clarified in Ḥadīth itself. In Abū Dāwūd, Tirmidhī, An-Nasā'ī and Ibn Mājah, there is a narration from Sayyidnā 'Uqbah Ibn 'Amir ﵁. It appears in Kitāb ul-Jihād in the words: لَيْسَ مِنَ اللَّهْوِ ثَلَاثٌ تَأدِيبُ الرَّجُلِ فَرَسَهُ' وَمَلَاعَبَتُهُ' اَهْلَهُ' وَرَمْيُهُ' بِقَوْسِهِ وَنَبْلِهِ (Three things do not fall under *'lahw:'* (1) Man training his horse and (2) playing with his wife and (3) shooting with his bow and arrows (Naṣbur-Rāyah, p. 273, v. 4). This Ḥadīth has itself made it clear that these three things that have been exempted are simply not included in *'lahw.'*- and that which is really *'lahw'* is false and blameworthy. The different degrees of its blameworthiness follow next:

1. Playing that becomes a conduit of going astray from one's Religion, or making others turn away from it, is *kufr* (infidelity) - as stated in the cited verse: وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يَّشْتَرِىْ لَهْوَالْحَدِيْثِ - 6. There it has been declared to be an act of grave error and infidelity, the punishment of which is painful, a punishment particular to those who have disbelieved (*kuffār*). The reason is that this verse was revealed following an event relating to Naḍr Ibn Ḥārith in which he had used this *'lahw'* to divert people from Islām. Therefore, this *'lahw'* (distracting amusement) did not remain simply *ḥarām* (forbidden), in fact, it went to the extent of becoming *kufr* (infidelity).

2. The second form is that which does not make people go astray from Islamic Beliefs, but does make them get involved with something forbidden and sinful. This, then, would not be *kufr* as such. But, patently unlawful and gravely sinful it shall remain - as do all those games played with bets. In other words, these may be games where the element of gambling (*qimār*) is present with giving or

taking of money on winning or losing, or recreational activities that impede the performance of religious duties such as prayers and fasting etc.

The reading of Shameless Fiction or Poetry or Writings of the Proponents of the False is also Not Permissible.

In our time, an alarming number of young people get introduced to shameless fiction, stories and novels based on plots featuring people who fancy and flirt with crimes, and poetry composed of indecent and shameless couplets. All these things are included under this kind of distracting amusement which is forbidden '*lahw*.' Similarly, the study of ideas dished out by the wayward proponents of the false is also not permissible for common people, because this could become an active agent in misleading them from the straight path. Should the 'Ulamā' who are well grounded in religious knowledge study them for rebuttal, it does not matter.

3. As for playing games that have neither an element of *kufr* (infidelity) nor of open sinfulness, they are *makrūh* (repugnant) in that one would be wasting his energy and time in an activity that yields no benefit.

Buying and Selling of the Equipment used in Games

From the details given above, we have also come to know the rule operating in the buying and selling of equipment used in games. The rule is that the trading, buying and selling of equipment used in games characterized by infidelity, error, unlawfulness and sin is also *ḥarām* (forbidden). And that which is used in *makrūh lahw*, its trading is also *makrūh*; and the equipment that is used in permissible and exempted games, its trading is also permissible; and the equipment that is used in permissible and impermissible activities both, its trading is permissible.

Allowed and Permissible Games

As already explained in detail, what is blameworthy and prohibited is that particular '*lahw*' or amusement or play or game which has no religious or worldly benefit in it. Games played to maintain physical health and mobility, or for some other religious or worldly need, or at the least, are for relief from fatigue without any excessive indulgence to the extent of causing disruption in necessary duties, then, such games are

allowed by the Sharī'ah. And should the participation in them be with the intention of fulfilling a religious need, then, they are *thawāb*-worthy as well.

Also mentioned in the Ḥadīth appearing above was the exemption of three game forms from the prohibition: Shooting of arrows, riding horses and playing with *'ahl'* (wife). And in a *marfū' ḥadīth* (attributed to the Holy Prophet ﷺ) from Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه, it appears: خير لهوالمؤمن السباحة وخير لهو المرأة المغزل (The best game for a believer is swimming and the best game for a woman is the spinning wheel) (al-Jami' aṣ-Ṣaghir, from Ibn 'Adiyy, with weak chain of narrators).

According to a narration, Sayyidnā Salamah Ibn Akwa' رضي الله عنه, says, "Someone from among the Anṣār of Madīnah was a great sprinter. No one could win a race against him. Once he publicly threw a challenge if there was anyone who would run a race against him. I sought the permission of the Holy Prophet ﷺ if I could compete against him. When he gave me the permission, I was the one who went ahead in the race.' This tells us that it is also permissible to practice foot racing.

Once, when a well-known wrestler called Rukānah challenged the Holy Prophet ﷺ to wrestle against him, he accepted the challenge and won the bout (Abū Dāwūd in al-marāsīl).

Some Ethiopian young men used to play with spears as a rehearsal. The Holy Prophet ﷺ let Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضى الله عنها see their game of martial skill while she stood behind his back and he said to the performers, "اِلْهُوا وَالْعَبُوْا" (*ilhū wal-'abū:* have fun, keep playing) [Reported by al-Baihaqī in Ash-Shu'ab, as in al-Kanz, Bab ul-Lahw). In some narrations, the following words also appear along with it: فَاِنِّیْ اَکْرَہُ اَنْ یُّرٰی فِیْ دِیْنِکُمْ غِلْظَةٌ (I do not like that people see harshness in your religion).

Similarly, it has been reported from some Ṣaḥābah that they, when tired after their duties relating to the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth, would once in a while relax with Arab poetry or historical events (from Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه in Kaff ar-Ra'a').

In a Ḥadīth, it was said: "رَوِّحُوا الْقُلُوْبَ سَاعَةً فَسَاعَةً"] (Let your hearts rest now and then).[Reported by Abū Dāwūd in his Marāsīl from Ibn Shihāb *'mursalan'*, that is, attributed to the Holy Prophet ﷺ by the student of one of the Ṣaḥābah with

the name of the narrating Ṣaḥabī not mentioned] This ḥadīth proves the permissibility of recreation meant to relax one's mind and heart and the need to spare some time for it.

However, when doing all these things, the aim should be to achieve the correct and sound objective of those games. Playing for the sake of playing should never be the objective. Even that too is restricted to the measure of need. Any indulgence that stretches to unreasonable proportions or touches the limits of excess would not be in order. Thus, the reason behind the justification of all these games is no other but that they have to be within their limits. If so, they would just not be counted as *'lahw.'*

Games Prohibited Explicitly

Along with the games mentioned above, there are others the Holy Prophet ﷺ has prohibited particularly - even though, some benefits may be seen therein - such as, chess, backgammon and others played with counters and pieces. If accompanied by giving and taking of money on winning and losing, then, this is gambling, and is absolutely *ḥarām* (forbidden). And should this not be the case and they may be played just for enjoyment, even then, they have been prohibited in Ḥadīth. According to a narration of Sayyidnā Buraidah in the Ṣaḥīḥ of Muslim, the Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "A person who plays backgammon is like the one who has smeared his hands with the blood of pig." Similar to this, there is another narration where words of curse appear against the player of chess. ('Uqaili in aḍ-Ḍu'afā' from Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ؓ as in Naṣbur-Rāyah)

Similarly, the Holy Prophet ﷺ has declared playing with pigeons as impermissible. [Abū Dāwūd in al-Marasīl from Shuraiḥ as in al-Kanz] The apparent reason for the prohibition of this type of pastimes is that the player of these games becomes so preoccupied with them that he would turn heedless towards other things he must do, even to Ṣalāh, and other religious obligations.

The Injunctions of Music and Musical Instruments

Some Ṣaḥābah have explained the expression: لَهْوَالْحَدِيْث (*lahw al-ḥadīth*: the distracting amusement of things) in the cited verse as singing and playing of musical instruments. Then, there are others who have explained it in the general sense and consider every such playful

activity that makes one heedless towards Allah to be the meaning of: لَهْوَالْحَدِيْث (*lahw al-ḥadīth*). But, even in their view, singing and playing of instrumental music are included therein.

And in another verse of the Qur'ān: لَايَشْهَدُوْنَ الزُّوْرَ (those who do not witness falsehood - Al-Furqān, 25:72), the word: ... (az-zūr: falsehood, the false) has been explained by Imām Abū Ḥanīfah, Mujāhid, Muḥammad Ibn al-Ḥanafiyyah and others as '*ghinā* (singing and playing of instrumental music).

And Abū Dāwūd and Ibn Mājah in Sunan and Ibn Ḥibbān in his Ṣaḥīḥ have reported from Sayyidnā Abū Mālik al-Ash'arī ﷺ that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said:

لَيَشْرَبَنَّ نَاسٌ مِّنْ أُمَّتِي الْخَمْرَ يُسَمُّوْنَهَا بِغَيْرِ اسْمِهَا يُعْزَفُ عَلٰى رُؤُسِهِمْ بِالْمَعَازِفِ وَالْمُغَنِّيَاتِ، يَخْسِفُ اللّٰهُ بِهِمُ الْاَرْضَ وَيَجْعَلُ اللّٰهُ مِنْهُمُ الْقِرَدَةَ وَالْخَنَازِيْرَ

Indeed some people from my community will drink wine giving it a name other than the name it already has. Music will be played right on their faces with instruments and singing women in attendance. Allah Ta'ala will make the earth sink with them, while He will make some of them monkeys and pigs.

And according to a narration from Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ, the Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "Allah Ta'ālā has forbidden wine, gambling, drum and *sārangī* (string instrument like violin) and he said, "Everything that intoxicates is *ḥarām* (forbidden, unlawful) [Reported by Imām Aḥmad, Abū Dāwūd and Ibn Ḥibbān]

It has been reported from Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ﷺ that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said:

روى عن ابى هُريرةؓ قال قال رسول اللّٰه صلى اللّٰه عليه وسلّم اذا اتخذ الفئ دولاً والامانة مغنمًا والزكوٰة مغرمًا وتعلم لغيرالدين واطاع الرجل امرأته وعقّ أمّه وأدنى صديقه وأقصى أباه وظهرت الاصوات فى المساجد وساد القبيلة فاسقهم وكان زعيم القوم أرذلهم وأُكرِمَ الرّجل مخافة شرّه وظهرت القيان و المعازف وشربت الخمور ولعن أخرهذه الأمّة أوّلها فليرتقبوا عند ذٰلك ريحا حمراء وزلزلة وخسفًا ومسخًا وقذفًا وآيات تتابع كنظام بال قطع سلكه فتتابع بعضه بعضا (رواه الترمذى وقال هذا حديث حسن غريب)

When spoils are taken as personal property and trust property

as spoils and Zakāh as penalty, and religious learning is acquired for worldly objectives, and when man starts obeying his wife and disobeying his mother, and keeps his friend near and his father far, and when voices rise in mosques and the chief of a tribe becomes its worst sinner and when the chief of a people becomes their lowest of the low and when wicked people are respected out of fear for them, and when singing girls and musical instruments appear all over and when wines of all sorts are consumed and when the later of this Ummah start cursing the former - then, at that time, you wait for a red storm, and earthquake, and the sinking of the earth, and the metamorphosis of figures and faces, and missiles, and the signs of Doomsday following each other, one after the other, like a broken necklace with its beads scattered simultaneously.

(Reported by Tirmidhī calling it a Hasan-Gharīb Ḥadīth)

A Warning Not to Be Ignored!

Read the words of this Ḥadīth again and again, and you will start seeing a blueprint of the world of our time spread out before you. Here is an advance warning given by the Holy Prophet ﷺ almost fourteen hundred years ago, against sins prevailing among Muslims, and which are increasing day by day. He has reminded Muslims that they have to remain vigilant against such conditions and take full precautions to avoid such sins both personally and socially. Otherwise, once these sins become accepted common practice, such sinners will be visited by Divine punishments. Then, the very last signs of Qiyāmah will appear squarely before them. Since, the singing of women and the playing of musical instruments are included under those sins, this narration has been cited in the present context.

For that matter, there are many more authentic Aḥādīth where singing and playing of musical instruments have been declared unlawful and impermissible. Severe warnings have been given against indulging in these. This humble writer has cited all these narrations in his treatise entitled: كشف الغناء عن وصف الغنا which is in Arabic and has been published as Part V of Aḥkām ul-Qur'ān. Only some of those have been given here.

Reciting morally beneficial poetry in a good voice without musical instruments is not prohibited

In contrast to what has been stated above, there are narrations that

seem to hint towards permissibility of '*ghinā*' (singing). Such narrations have also been collected and included in the treatise referred to here. To bring the two kinds of narration in harmony, it can be said that the singing of a *non-maḥram* woman, or a song accompanied by musical instruments are forbidden. This is in accordance with what has been proved on the authority of the cited verses of the Qur'ān and from the Aḥādīth of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. However, if some poetic compositions are recited in a pleasing voice, and the reciting person is not a woman or a beardless young man, and the subject of the poetry recited is also not vulgar or indecent and is not inclusive of any other sin, then, it is permissible.

As for the reports attributed to some revered *ṣūfīs*, that they listened to '*ghinā*' (*samā*'), it is based on this kind of permissible '*ghinā*'- because, it is certain that they followed the Sharī'ah and Sunnah faithfully. That they would ever commit some such sin, simply cannot be imagined. Those learned among the Ṣūfīs have themselves explained it explicitly. The treatise mentioned earlier carries the sayings of the jurists of the four schools of jurisprudence as well as those of the Ṣūfī authorities. At this place, the summary as given has been considered sufficient in the present context.*

Verses 10 - 11

خَلَقَ السَّمٰوٰتِ بِغَيْرِ عَمَدٍ تَرَوْنَهَا وَاَلْقٰى فِى الْاَرْضِ رَوَاسِىَ اَنْ
تَمِيْدَ بِكُمْ وَبَثَّ فِيْهَا مِنْ كُلِّ دَآبَّةٍ ؕ وَاَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ السَّمَآءِ مَآءً فَاَنْۢبَتْنَا
فِيْهَا مِنْ كُلِّ زَوْجٍ كَرِيْمٍ ﴿١٠﴾ هٰذَا خَلْقُ اللّٰهِ فَاَرُوْنِىْ مَاذَا خَلَقَ
الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِهٖ ؕ بَلِ الظّٰلِمُوْنَ فِىْ ضَلٰلٍ مُّبِيْنٍ ﴿١١﴾

He has created the skies without the pillars that you may see, and placed mountains on the earth, lest it shakes with you, and spread over it all kinds of creatures. And We sent down water from the heavens and caused to grow in it every noble pair. [10] **This is**

*. The original work in Arabic and its Urdu translation with exhaustive notes under the title, "Islām *aur Mausiqi*" (Islām and Music) has been published by Maktaba-e-Darul-Uloom, Jamia Darul-Uloom, Korangi, Karachi-75180, Pakistan. Those interested in a detailed discussion of the subject would find both versions useful.

the creation of Allah. Now, show me what is created by those others, besides Him. Rather, the transgressors are in open error. [11]

Commentary

Verse 10 opens with the words: خَلَقَ السَّمٰوٰتِ بِغَيْرِ عَمَدٍ تَرَوْنَهَا (He has created the skies without the pillars that you may see). Another verse on the same subject: اَللّٰهُ الَّذِىْ رَفَعَ السَّمٰوٰتِ بِغَيْرِ عَمَدٍ تَرَوْنَهَا (Allah is the One who raised the heavens without pillars. You see them. 13:2) has appeared earlier in Sūrah Ar-Ra'd (with a different translation). Analyzed grammatically, the text admits two alternative meanings.

1. If we were to take تَرَوْنَهَا (*tarawnahā*) to be the attribute of عَمَد (*'amad*) and revert its pronoun to *'amad*, it would mean that Allah Ta'ālā created the skies without pillars that you may see, that is, had the pillars been there, you would have seen them. When pillars are not seen, it is clear that this great roof of the sky has been erected without pillars. This explanation has been reported from Sayyidnā Ḥasan ؓ and Qatādah. (Ibn Kathīr)

2. And if we were to take the pronoun of: تَرَوْنَهَا (*tarawnahā*) as reverting to: السَّمٰوٰت (*as-samāwāt*: the skies) and this sentence as standing independently, then, it would mean that 'Allah Ta'ālā created the skies without pillars as you see.' Then, there is yet another option in the case of the first grammatical analysis whereby it could also be taken to mean that 'The skies stand on pillars that you cannot see - they are invisible.' This last explanation has been reported from Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās, 'Ikrimah and Mujāhid رضى الله عنهم اجمعين (Ibn Kathīr).

No matter what the option, the verse does point out to the particular sign of the perfect power of Allah Ta'ālā that He has made this extensive, high and magnificent roof in a way that no column and pillar is seen thereunder.

Verses 12 - 19

وَلَقَدْ اٰتَيْنَا لُقْمٰنَ الْحِكْمَةَ اَنِ اشْكُرْ لِلّٰهِ ؕ وَمَنْ يَّشْكُرْ فَاِنَّمَا يَشْكُرُ لِنَفْسِهٖ ۚ وَمَنْ كَفَرَ فَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ غَنِىٌّ حَمِيْدٌ ﴿۱۲﴾ وَاِذْ قَالَ لُقْمٰنُ لِابْنِهٖ

وَهُوَ يَعِظُهٗ يٰبُنَيَّ لَا تُشْرِكْ بِاللّٰهِ ؕ اِنَّ الشِّرْكَ لَظُلْمٌ عَظِيْمٌ ﴿١٣﴾
وَوَصَّيْنَا الْاِنْسَانَ بِوَالِدَيْهِ ۚ حَمَلَتْهُ اُمُّهٗ وَهْنًا عَلٰى وَهْنٍ وَّفِصٰلُهٗ فِيْ
عَامَيْنِ اَنِ اشْكُرْ لِيْ وَلِوَالِدَيْكَ ؕ اِلَيَّ الْمَصِيْرُ ﴿١٤﴾ وَاِنْ جَاهَدٰكَ
عَلٰى اَنْ تُشْرِكَ بِيْ مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهٖ عِلْمٌ ۙ فَلَا تُطِعْهُمَا وَصَاحِبْهُمَا فِي
الدُّنْيَا مَعْرُوْفًا وَّاتَّبِعْ سَبِيْلَ مَنْ اَنَابَ اِلَيَّ ۚ ثُمَّ اِلَيَّ مَرْجِعُكُمْ
فَاُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿١٥﴾ يٰبُنَيَّ اِنَّهَاۤ اِنْ تَكُ مِثْقَالَ حَبَّةٍ مِّنْ
خَرْدَلٍ فَتَكُنْ فِيْ صَخْرَةٍ اَوْ فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ اَوْ فِي الْاَرْضِ يَاْتِ بِهَا
اللّٰهُ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَطِيْفٌ خَبِيْرٌ ﴿١٦﴾ يٰبُنَيَّ اَقِمِ الصَّلٰوةَ وَاْمُرْ بِالْمَعْرُوْفِ
وَانْهَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَاصْبِرْ عَلٰى مَاۤ اَصَابَكَ ؕ اِنَّ ذٰلِكَ مِنْ عَزْمِ الْاُمُوْرِ
﴿١٧﴾ وَلَا تُصَعِّرْ خَدَّكَ لِلنَّاسِ وَلَا تَمْشِ فِي الْاَرْضِ مَرَحًا ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ
لَا يُحِبُّ كُلَّ مُخْتَالٍ فَخُوْرٍ ﴿١٨﴾ وَاقْصِدْ فِيْ مَشْيِكَ وَاغْضُضْ مِنْ
صَوْتِكَ ؕ اِنَّ اَنْكَرَ الْاَصْوَاتِ لَصَوْتُ الْحَمِيْرِ ﴿١٩﴾

And We gave wisdom to Luqmān, (and said), "Be grateful to Allah." And whoever is grateful is, in fact, grateful for his own benefit, and whoever is ungrateful, then Allah is free of all needs, worthy of all praise. [12]

And when Luqmān said to his son while he was advising him, "My dear son, do not ascribe partners to Allah. Indeed, ascribing partners to Allah (*shirk*) is grave transgression." [13]

We commanded man (to be good) about his parents. His mother carried him facing weakness after weakness, and his weaning is in two years: "Be grateful to Me and to your parents. To Me is the ultimate return. [14] And if they force you to ascribe to Him partners about whom you have no knowledge, do not obey them. And be with them in this world, with due fairness, and follow the way of the one who has turned himself towards Me. Then, towards Me is your return, so I shall tell you about what you had been doing." [15]

"My dear son, in fact, if there be anything to the measure of a grain of rye, and it be (hidden) in a rock or in the heavens or in the earth, Allah will bring it forth. Surely, Allah is All-Fine, All Aware. [16] **My dear son, establish Ṣalāh, and bid the Fair and forbid the Unfair, and observe patience on what befalls you. Surely, this is among the matters of determination.** [17] **And do not turn your cheek away from people, and do not walk on the earth haughtily. Surely, Allah does not like anyone arrogant, proud.** [18] **And be moderate in your walk, and lower your voice. Surely, the ugliest of voices is the voice of the donkeys."** [19]

Commentary

Who was Luqmān عليه السلام mentioned in verse 12: وَلَقَدْ اٰتَيْنَا لُقْمٰنَ الْحِكْمَةَ (And We gave wisdom to Luqmān)? According to a report of Wahb Ibn Munnabih, Luqmān, عليه السلام was a nephew of Sayyidnā Ayyūb (Job) عليه السلام while Muqātil identifies him as his brother from his maternal aunt. It appears in Tafsīr ul-Baiḍāwī and elsewhere that he lived long, as long as the time of Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام. It is proved by other reports too that Luqmān, عليه السلام appeared during the time of Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام.

And the report of Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه appearing in ad-Durr al-Manthūr says that he was an Ethiopian slave who worked as a carpenter (narrated by Ibn Abī Shaibah and Aḥmad in az-Zuhd, and Ibn Jarīr and Ibn al-Mundhir and others). When the Ṣaḥābī, Sayyidnā Jābir Ibn 'Abdullāh رضي الله عنه was asked about his background, he said that he was an Ethiopian of low height and flat nose. And Mujāhid said that he was a thick-lipped, cracked-footed Ethiopian slave (al-Zajjāj). (Ibn Kathīr)

An Ethiopian came to Sa'īd Ibn al-Musayyab looking for an answer to some religious problem. The famous Tābi'ī consoled him by telling him that he should not worry about the dark color of his skin, because there were three highly revered persons from among the black people who were regarded as the best of any people anywhere. Then he cited the names of Sayyidnā Bilāl al-Ḥabashī, Sayyidnā Mahja', the freed slave of Sayyidnā 'Umar Ibn ul-Khaṭṭāb رضی الله عنهم اجمعين, and Luqmān عليه السلام.

The Identity of Luqmān عليه السلام

According to Ibn Kathīr, the majority of the elders concur that he was not a prophet. That he was a prophet has been reported only from

'Ikrimah , but the authority of this report is weak. Then, Imām al-Baghawī reports a consensus on the fact that he was a man of wisdom and knowledgeable in religious law, but not a prophet. (Maẓharī)

Ibn Kathīr has also pointed out to an unusual report from Sayyidnā Qatādah about him saying that Allah Ta'ālā had given Luqmān عليه السلام a choice between prophethood (*nubuwwah*) and wisdom (*ḥikmah*). He opted for wisdom. And in some reports, it appears that he was given the option to be a prophet. But he had submitted that he would be honored to accept it if that was a command, otherwise he should be excused.

Again, it has also been reported from Sayyidnā Qatādah that someone asked Luqmān, عليه السلام: 'Why did you prefer wisdom over prophethood while you were given a choice between the two?' He said, 'The office of a prophet carries great responsibilities. Had that been given to me without my choice, Allah Ta'ālā would have been sufficient to see that I am enabled to discharge its responsibilities as due. And if I had asked for it with my choice and volition, the responsibility would have been mine.' (Ibn Kathīr)

Now, it already stands established that Luqmān عليه السلام was not a *Nabiyy* or prophet. This is as held by the majority of the scholars. So, we can say that the command mentioned in the present verse (i.e.Be grateful to Allah) could have been given to him through Ilhām (inspiration) attributed to men of Allah (*awliyā' Allah*).

Before the time of Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام, Luqmān عليه السلام used to give *Fatwā* (religious rulings on questions asked by people). When Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام was invested with prophethood, he stopped this practice believing that he was not needed anymore. According to some reports, he was a judge among the Banī Isrā'īl. Many words of wisdom have been reported from him. Wahb Ibn Munnabih says that he has read more than ten thousand of these. (Qurṭubī)

On a certain day, while sage Luqmān was addressing a big gathering of people sharing his wisdom with them, there came a person and asked him point blank: 'Are you not the same person who used to graze goats with me in such and such forest?' Luqmān عليه السلام, said: 'Yes, I am the same person." The man asked, 'How then, could you achieve this status that such multitudes of people hold you in reverence and come to hear your

words from far and wide?' Luqmān ﷺ, said: 'The reason lies in two things I do: (1) Always telling the truth and (2) avoiding the useless things. It appears in another report that he said: 'I tell you about a few things that have given me this station in life. If you were to take to these, you too will have the same rank and status. These are as follow: (1) Lower your gaze and hold your tongue. (2) Stay content with lawful sustenance. (3) Guard your private parts. (4) Tell the truth and uphold it. (5) Fulfill the pledge. (6) Honor the guest. (7) Protect the neighbor. (8) Observe silence against wasteful speech and leave off all useless indulgences.' (Ibn Kathīr)

What does the '*ḥikmah*' given to Luqmān actually mean?

The word: حكمة (*ḥikmah*) has been used in the Qur'ān (20 times) conveying several meanings such as wisdom, knowledge, reason, forbearance, patience, prophethood, and correctness of opinion.

Commentator Abū Ḥayyān has said: '*Ḥikmah* means a statement in words, a statement that teaches people a lesson, a lesson that goes down their hearts and which they conserve and communicate to others.'

And the famous Ṣaḥābī, Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه said: '*Ḥikmah* means intellect, understanding and intelligence' while some others have said that acting in accordance with knowledge is what *Ḥikmah* is. In reality, there is no contradiction here. All these ingredients are included under the purview of *Ḥikmah*. Those who have seen the abridged *Tafsīr* of moulana Ashraf Alī Thānavi in the original Urdu version of the present Tafsīr will notice that he has translated *Ḥikmah* in the sense of prudence and wisdom and explained it as being knowledge that has been put into practice. This is very comprehensive and very clear.

After having mentioned the giving of *Ḥikmah* to Luqmān, on whom be peace, in this verse (12), it was said: "Be grateful to Allah." Here, the first probability is to take the word: قلنا (*qulnā*: We said) as understood. The sense would be that 'We gave *Ḥikmah* to Luqmān and commanded him to be grateful to Allah.' Then, there are others who have also said that the statement: أن اشكر لله (*anishkur lillah*: Be grateful to Allah) is in itself an explanation of *Ḥikmah*. In other words, the *Ḥikmah* given to Luqmān was that 'We gave him the command to be grateful which he

carried out.' In that case, it would mean that being grateful to the blessings of Allah Ta'ālā is the greatest wisdom (*ḥikmah*). Soon after, it was explicitly clarified that this command to be grateful was not given by Allah Ta'ālā to earn some benefit for Himself. He needs no gratefulness from anyone. In fact, it has been done in the interest of human beings and for their benefit - because, according to the law of Allah, whoever is grateful to Him, He causes an increase in the blessings given to a person.

Mentioned after that there are some words of wise counsel spoken by Luqmān to his son. These have been reported by the Qur'ān so that others may also benefit from these.

Out of these wise advices, first comes the soundness of beliefs, the primary article of which is that one believes in Allah Ta'ālā to be the Creator and master of the entire universe without any association or partnership of anyone or anything. In consequence, one should not take anyone other than Allah as an object of worship, for no injustice can be as grave in this world as the act of one who stoops to equate some creation of Allah Ta'ālā with the Creator. Therefore, it was said: يٰبُنَيَّ لَاتُشْرِكْ بِاللّٰهِ اِنَّ الشِّرْكَ لَظُلْمٌ عَظِيْمٌ (My dear son, do not ascribe partners to Allah. Indeed, ascribing partners to Allah is (*shirk*) grave transgression - 13). Later, follow other words of good counsel and wisdom spoken by Luqmān to his son. In between, there appears another command to highlight the gravity of *Shirk* and that it has to be avoided under all circumstances.This command is as follows:

وَوَصَّيْنَا الْاِنْسَانَ بِوَالِدَيْهِ ۚ حَمَلَتْهُ اُمُّهٗ وَهْنًا عَلٰى وَهْنٍ وَّفِصٰلُهٗ فِىْ عَامَيْنِ اَنِ اشْكُرْلِىْ
وَلِوَالِدَيْكَ ۭ اِلَىَّ الْمَصِيْرُ ﴿١٤﴾ وَاِنْ جَاهَدٰكَ عَلٰى اَنْ تُشْرِكَ بِىْ مَالَيْسَ لَكَ بِهٖ عِلْمٌ ۙ
فَلَا تُطِعْهُمَا وَصَاحِبْهُمَا فِى الدُّنْيَا مَعْرُوْفًا وَّاتَّبِعْ سَبِيْلَ مَنْ اَنَابَ اِلَىَّ ۚ ثُمَّ اِلَىَّ
مَرْجِعُكُمْ فَاُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿١٥﴾

And We commanded man (to be good) about his parents. His mother carried him facing weakness after weakness, and his weaning is in two years: "Be grateful to Me and to your parents. To Me is the ultimate return. [14] And if they force you to ascribe to Him partners about whom you have no knowledge, do not obey them. And be with them, in this world, with due fairness, and follow the way of the one who has turned himself towards Me. Then, towards Me is your return, so I shall tell you

about what you had been doing." [15]

Gratitude and Obedience to Parents is Obligatory - but, Obedience to anyone Counter to Divine Command is not Permissible

In effect, the command quoted above means: 'No doubt, We have asked children to be grateful and obedient to their parents. We have even commanded them to be grateful to Us, and along with it, to be grateful and obedient to their parents. But, *Shirk* (the ascribing of partners in the pristine divinity of Allah Ta'ālā) is so grave a transgression and so serious a sin that it does not become permissible for anyone, not even if one's parents command or force someone to commit it. If the parents of a person start forcing him or her to take someone as a partner of Allah Ta'ālā, even in that case, it is not permissible to obey their command.'

Now, at this place, where command has been given to be grateful to parents and fulfill their rights, also pointed out is its efficient cause. Is it not that one's mother has undergone great trial in the phenomena of his or her life and survival? She has kept the child in her body for nine months remaining vigilant and protective all the time. Because of this, day by day, her weakness and discomfort kept increasing. This she braved through. Then, even after the birth of the child, she handled the task of feeding the child, a task that demanded painstaking attention day and night and which also added to the already receding graph of her weakness. Since, it is the mother who faces most of the hardship in bringing up the child, therefore, the right of mother has been made to precede even the right of father in the Shari'ah of Islām. What has been said in: وَوَصَّيْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ بِوَالِدَيْهِ ج حَمَلَتْهُ أُمُّهُ وَهْنًا عَلَى وَهْنٍ وَّفِصٰلُهُ فِي عَامَيْنِ (And We commanded man [to be good] about his parents. His mother carried him facing weakness after weakness, and his weaning is in two years - 14) comes to mean exactly this. After that, in: وَإِنْ جَاهَدٰكَ (And if they force you - 15), it was pointed out that the matter of ascribing anyone other than Allah with Him is serious. In it, even the (otherwise essential) obedience to parents is *ḥarām* (unlawful).

Islām's Peerless Law of Justice

Now in a situation under which the parents force a son or daughter to take to *Shirk* and *Kufr* while the command of Allah Ta'ālā tells them not to do what they say, things become difficult. One naturally fails to stay

within limits. In this case, while implementing the Divine injunction, the probability did exist that the son or daughter would have used improper language or manners in their response to parents and thus insulted them. Islām is a law, just and equitable. Here, everything has a limit. Therefore, right along with the command of not obeying parents in matters of *Shirk*, also given there was the command: صَاحِبْهُمَا فِى الدُّنْيَا مَعْرُوفًا (And be with them, in this world, with due fairness - 15).

It means: 'In the matter of the contravention of your faith and religion, do not obey parents. But, when it comes to worldly matters, such as serving parents physically or financially or in any other way necessary, do not fall short about it. Instead, deal with them in mundane matters according to recognized custom. Show no disrespect to them. Do not respond to what they say in a manner that hurts them unnecessarily. In other words, the pain you cause them by not accepting their insistence on *Shirk* and *Kufr* is something you will have to bear by, since you have no choice there. But, let this necessity stay within its functional limits and keep abstaining from causing any pain to them in other matters.'

Special Note

As for the weaning period of two years for a child mentioned in the verse, it is in accordance with customary practice. It carries no clarification concerning the injunction relevant to any additional period of suckling the child. A detailed explanation of this issue will, *insha'Allah*, appear under the commentary on the verse: وَحَمْلُهُ وَفِصٰلُهُ ثَلٰثُونَ شَهْرًا (And his carrying and weaning is (in) thirty months - Al-Ahqāf, 46:15).

The Second Bequest of Luqmān about Articles of Belief

One should irrevocably hold the belief that the knowledge of Allah Ta'ālā surrounds every single particle of whatever there is in and around the expanses of the heavens and the earth with His most perfect power. Nothing can - be it the smallest of the small not commonly visible, or be it the farthest of the far, or be it behind layers upon layers of darkness and curtains - simply nothing can hide from the knowledge and view of Allah Ta'ālā. And He can, when He wills, cause it to be present, where He wills. This is what is meant by verse 16: يٰبُنَىَّ اِنَّهَآ اِنْ تَكُ مِثْقَالَ حَبَّةٍ مِّنْ خَرْدَلٍ (My dear son, in fact, if there be anything to the measure of a grain of rye, and it be [hidden] in a rock or in the heavens and the earth, Allah will bring it forth. Surely, Allah is All-Fine, All Aware). Then, the all-covering

knowledge and power of Allah Taʻālā is, in its own place, a basic belief of Islām - and certainly, a great proof of *Tauḥīd*, the belief in the Oneness of Allah.

The Third Bequest of Luqmān about the Correction of Deed

There are many obligatory deeds, but the greatest and the most important of these is Ṣalāh - and not simply that it is important by itself, it also happens to be the master deed that becomes the catalyst changing other deeds towards the better as was pointed out in the Holy Qur'ān about it: إِنَّ الصَّلٰوةَ تَنْهٰى عَنِ الْفَحْشَآءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ (Surely Ṣalāh restrains from shamelessness and evil - Al-'Ankabūt, 29:45). Therefore, out of the obligatory good deeds, the mention of Ṣalāh was considered sufficient when it was said: يٰبُنَيَّ أَقِمِ الصَّلٰوةَ (My dear son, establish Ṣalāh - 17). And as it has been explained earlier, the expression denoting the *'iqāmah'* of *ṣalāh* does not simply suggest the 'making' or 'saying' or 'doing' it. Instead of that, this term translated as 'establish' (in the absence of an exact equivalent) includes all attending considerations, such as performing it with due respect to its essentials and manners fully and faithfully, observing punctuality in its timings and being consistent in fulfilling its requisites.

The Fourth Bequest of Luqmān about the Betterment of People

Islām is a collective religion. Betterment of the community, along with the betterment of the individual, is an important part of its social system. Therefore, the duty of Bidding the Fair and Forbidding the Unfair (*amr bi 'l-maʻrūf and nahy 'ani 'l-munkar*) was mentioned along with as important a duty as the Ṣalāh. It was said: وَأْمُرْ بِالْمَعْرُوْفِ وَانْهَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ (and bid the Fair and forbid the Unfair -17). Here are two duties: (1) Make yourself better and (2) make others better. Both need a lot of restraint and hard work. Facing these difficulties and remaining firm is no easy task. Particularly so, when those who stand to serve people by telling them what is good for them receive nothing but opposition and hostility in return. Therefore, while making this recommendation, it was also recommended: وَاصْبِرْ عَلٰى مَآ أَصَابَكَ إِنَّ ذٰلِكَ مِنْ عَزْمِ الْأُمُوْرِ (and observe patience on what befalls you. Surely, this is among the matters of determination - 17).

The Fifth Bequest of Luqmān about Social Manners

In verse 18, it was said: وَلَا تُصَعِّرْ خَدَّكَ لِلنَّاسِ (And do not turn your cheek away from people). The expression: لَاتُصَعِّرْ (*lā tuṣaʻʻir*) is a derivation from:

صَعَر (*ṣa'ara*) which is a disease among camels that causes a tilt in the neck similar to the stroke among human beings that makes the face become crooked. It carries the sense of turning one's face away (in disdain). Thus, the verse means: 'do not turn your face away from people when you meet them and talk to them for it is a sign of avoidance and arrogance and very much against the norms of gentle manners.'

In the next sentence of the verse, it was said: وَلَا تَمْشِ فِي الْأَرْضِ مَرَحًا (and do not walk on the earth haughtily - 18). The last word: مَرَحًا (*maraḥa*) denotes walking proudly with assumed airs. The sense of the statement is that Allah Ta'ālā has given this earth the lowest profile from among the entire range of elements He created. Is it not that you were born from it and on it you walk around? Know your reality and do not walk haughtily. This is the way of the arrogant. Therefore, after that, it was said: إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ كُلَّ مُخْتَالٍ فَخُورٍ (Surely, Allah does not like anyone arrogant, proud - 18).

Verse 19 begins with the statement: وَاقْصِدْ فِي مَشْيِكَ (And be moderate in your walk). When done otherwise, in haste or helter-skelter, it goes against decorum and dignity. Says the Ḥadīth: "Making too much haste in walking ruins the radiance of the believer (al-Jami' aṣ-Ṣaghīr from Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ﷺ). Then, in a manner of walking such as this, there remains the likelihood of hurting one's own self or someone else as well. And being moderate in walking also tells us that one should not walk very slowly either. This is the habit of the arrogant and the ostentatious who like to impress people with their distinct class. Or, it is the habit of women who do not walk fast due to their natural modesty. Or, it is the habit of the sick in need of urgent medical attention who would do so out of compulsion. The first mode is *ḥarām*, and the second too, for it is not permissible if the intention is to strike a semblance with women. And when no such intention is there, the thing remains, after all, a defect for men. Finally, in the third mode, it is ungratefulness to Allah in that one stoops to feign the looks of the sick despite being all too healthy.

Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd ﷺ said: 'The noble Ṣaḥābah were prohibited from walking hurriedly (as if running) like the Jews and also from walking very slowly (as if crawling) like the Christians. The order given to them was that they should take to a moderate gait in between the two.'

When Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضى الله عنها saw a person walking very slowly as if he was going to fall dead, she asked the people around, 'Why does he have to walk like that?' They told her, 'He is one of the Qurrā'.' The word: قُرَّاء (*qurrā'*) is the plural of: القارى (*al-qārī*: one trained to recite the Qur'ān in accordance with its Phonetics). In those days, someone who combined the twin mastery of reciting the Qur'ān with authenticity and observance of due etiquette as well as being a perfect scholar of the Qur'ān was also called a *Qari'*. So, by saying what they did, they meant that he was some big *Qari'* and 'Ālim, therefore, he walked like that. Thereupon, Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضى الله عنها said, "Umar Ibn ul-Khaṭṭāb, may Allah be pleased with him, was a lot more Qārī' than he is. But, his habit was to walk swiftly when he walked (not in the sense of post-haste walking which is prohibited, rather meaning a functional swiftness in it). And when he talked, he talked in a manner that people would hear him well (not speaking at a pitch so low as would compel his audience to ask: Beg your pardon, what did you say)?

At the end of the fifth recommendation it was said: وَاغْضُضْ مِنْ صَوْتِكَ (and lower your voice - 19). 'Lowering' means: Do not raise your voice any more than necessary. And do not shout - as it appeared in the case of Sayyidnā 'Umar ﷺ immediately earlier. He talked in a manner that his audience would hear him without having to put any strain on their ears. Thereafter, it was said: اِنَّ اَنْكَرَ الْاَصْوَاتِ لَصَوْتُ الْحَمِيْرِ. (Surely, the ugliest of voices is the voice of the donkeys - 19).

Regarding social manners, four prohibitions were mentioned here: (1) The prohibition of talking to and meeting with people face turned arrogantly; (2) the prohibition of walking haughtily on God's earth; (3) the instruction to be moderate in one's walking; and (4) the prohibition of talking very loudly.

All these virtues were already part of the habits and traits of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. As in the Shamā'il of Tirmidhī, Sayyidnā Ḥusain ﷺ says that he asked his father, Sayyidnā 'Alī al-Murtaḍa ﷺ about the manner in which he interacted with people he sat with. He said:

كان دائم البشر سهل الخلق ليّن الجانب ليس بفظٍّ ولا غليظ ولا صخاب فى
الاسواق ولا فحّاش ولا عيّاب ولا مُشاحٍ يتغافل عمّا لا يشتهى ولا يؤيس منه ولا

يجيب فيه قد ترک نفسه من ثلاث المراء والا کبار ومالا يعنيه

"He was always cheerful, naturally obliging, gentle. Neither impolite, nor rude, he was not clamorous or immodest and no faultfinder and no miser. He would remain indifferent to what he did not like, yet would not make others become distracted from it (if *halal* and desirable to have) and would not say anything that would stop others from having what he did not want (instead, would observe silence). There were three things he had left out for good: (1) Disputation, (2) Arrogance and (3) Indulgence with what was unnecessary, not worth doing."

Verses 20 - 32

اَلَمْ تَرَوْا اَنَّ اللّٰهَ سَخَّرَ لَكُمْ مَّا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَا فِي الْاَرْضِ وَاَسْبَغَ
عَلَيْكُمْ نِعَمَهٗ ظَاهِرَةً وَّبَاطِنَةً ؕ وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يُّجَادِلُ فِي اللّٰهِ بِغَيْرِ
عِلْمٍ وَّلَا هُدًى وَّلَا كِتٰبٍ مُّنِيْرٍ ﴿٢٠﴾ وَاِذَا قِيْلَ لَهُمُ اتَّبِعُوْا مَآ اَنْزَلَ
اللّٰهُ قَالُوْا بَلْ نَتَّبِعُ مَا وَجَدْنَا عَلَيْهِ اٰبَآءَنَا ؕ اَوَلَوْ كَانَ الشَّيْطٰنُ
يَدْعُوْهُمْ اِلٰى عَذَابِ السَّعِيْرِ ﴿٢١﴾ وَمَنْ يُّسْلِمْ وَجْهَهٗ اِلَى اللّٰهِ وَهُوَ
مُحْسِنٌ فَقَدِ اسْتَمْسَكَ بِالْعُرْوَةِ الْوُثْقٰى ؕ وَاِلَى اللّٰهِ عَاقِبَةُ الْاُمُوْرِ
﴿٢٢﴾ وَمَنْ كَفَرَ فَلَا يَحْزُنْكَ كُفْرُهٗ ؕ اِلَيْنَا مَرْجِعُهُمْ فَنُنَبِّئُهُمْ بِمَا
عَمِلُوْا ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ عَلِيْمٌۢ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُوْرِ ﴿٢٣﴾ نُمَتِّعُهُمْ قَلِيْلًا ثُمَّ
نَضْطَرُّهُمْ اِلٰى عَذَابٍ غَلِيْظٍ ﴿٢٤﴾ وَلَئِنْ سَاَلْتَهُمْ مَّنْ خَلَقَ
السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضَ لَيَقُوْلُنَّ اللّٰهُ ؕ قُلِ الْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ ؕ بَلْ اَكْثَرُهُمْ
لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٢٥﴾ لِلّٰهِ مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ هُوَ الْغَنِيُّ
الْحَمِيْدُ ﴿٢٦﴾ وَلَوْ اَنَّ مَا فِي الْاَرْضِ مِنْ شَجَرَةٍ اَقْلَامٌ وَّالْبَحْرُ يَمُدُّهٗ
مِنْۢ بَعْدِهٖ سَبْعَةُ اَبْحُرٍ مَّا نَفِدَتْ كَلِمٰتُ اللّٰهِ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ عَزِيْزٌ حَكِيْمٌ
﴿٢٧﴾ مَا خَلْقُكُمْ وَلَا بَعْثُكُمْ اِلَّا كَنَفْسٍ وَّاحِدَةٍ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ سَمِيْعٌۢ
بَصِيْرٌ ﴿٢٨﴾ اَلَمْ تَرَ اَنَّ اللّٰهَ يُوْلِجُ الَّيْلَ فِي النَّهَارِ وَيُوْلِجُ النَّهَارَ فِي

الَّيْلِ وَسَخَّرَ الشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ ز كُلٌّ يَّجْرِيْٓ اِلٰٓى اَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى وَّاَنَّ
اللّٰهَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ خَبِيْرٌ ﴿۲۹﴾ ذٰلِكَ بِاَنَّ اللّٰهَ هُوَالْحَقُّ وَاَنَّ مَايَدْعُوْنَ
مِنْ دُوْنِهِ الْبَاطِلُ لا وَاَنَّ اللّٰهَ هُوَالْعَلِيُّ الْكَبِيْرُ ﴿۳۰﴾ اَلَمْ تَرَ اَنَّ الْفُلْكَ
تَجْرِيْ فِي الْبَحْرِ بِنِعْمَتِ اللّٰهِ لِيُرِيَكُمْ مِّنْ اٰيٰتِهٖ ط اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيٰتٍ
لِّكُلِّ صَبَّارٍ شَكُوْرٍ ﴿۳۱﴾ وَاِذَا غَشِيَهُمْ مَّوْجٌ كَالظُّلَلِ دَعَوُا اللّٰهَ
مُخْلِصِيْنَ لَهُ الدِّيْنَ ج فَلَمَّا نَجّٰىهُمْ اِلَى الْبَرِّ فَمِنْهُمْ مُّقْتَصِدٌ ط وَمَا
يَجْحَدُ بِاٰيٰتِنَآ اِلَّا كُلُّ خَتَّارٍ كَفُوْرٍ ﴿۳۲﴾

Have you not seen that Allah has subjugated for you what is in the heavens and what is on the earth and has perfected His blessings on you, both outward and inward? And among the people there is one who debates about Allah with no knowledge, no guidance and no book to enlighten. [20] **And when it is said to them, "follow what Allah has sent down," they say, "instead, we would follow what we found our fathers on." Is it so - even though the Satan has been calling them to the punishment of the flaming Fire?** [21]

And whoever submits his self to Allah and is good in deeds, he does, in fact, hold on to the strongest ring. And towards Allah is the ultimate end of all matters. [22]

And whoever disbelieves, let not his disbelief grieve you. To Us is their return. Then We will tell them what they did. Surely, Allah is All Aware of what lies in the hearts. [23] **We let them enjoy a little, then We will drag them to a heavy punishment.** [24]

And if you ask them as to who has created the heavens and the earth, they will certainly say, "Allah." Say, *"Alhamdulillah"* (Praise be to Allah). But most of them do not know. [25]

To Allah belongs what is in the heavens and the earth. Surely, it is Allah who is free of all needs, worthy of every praise. It is Allah who is All-Independent, Ever-Praised.[26]

And if all trees that are on the earth were to be pens

and the ocean (converted into ink) is supported by seven seas following it, the words of Allah would not come to an end. Surely, Allah is Mighty, Wise. [27]

Creation and resurrection of you all is no more (to Allah) than that of one single person. Surely, Allah is All-Hearing, All Seeing. [28]

Did you not see that Allah makes the night enter into the day, and makes the day enter into the night, and He has subjugated the sun and the moon, each running towards an appointed time, and that Allah is fully aware of what you do? [29] **That is because Allah is the only Real One and what they invoke other than Him is false and Allah is the High, the Great.** [30]

Did you not see that the ships sail through the sea by the grace of Allah, so that He shows you some of His signs? In that, indeed, there are signs for every man of patience and gratitude. [31]

And when they are covered by waves like canopies, they pray to Allah, having faith purely in Him. Then, once He brings them safe to the land, some of them are (still) balanced. And no one denies Our signs except every ungrateful traitor. [32]

Commentary

At the beginning of the Sūrah, the *Kāfirs* and the *Mushriks* were admonished for still persisting with their *Kufr* and *Shirk* despite that they had seen the manifestations of the all-encompassing knowledge and the most perfect power of Allah Ta'ālā. And in contrast to their condition, obedient believers were praised and mention was made of their good end. In between, the description of the bequests (*waṣāyā*) of Luqmān, peace on him, was in a way a complement of the same subject. In the verses cited above, the text reverts to the subjects of Allah Ta'ālā's all-encompassing knowledge and power, His bounties and favors showered on the creations with an exhortation to believe in the principle of His Oneness.

The expression: سَخَّرَ لَكُمْ (*sakhkhara lakum:* translated as 'subjugated for you') in verse 20: سَخَّرَ لَكُمْ مَّا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَا فِي الْاَرْضِ (Allah has subjugated for you what is in the heavens and what is on the earth) is well known and means to make something subservient to someone. This raises a question at this place. Is it not that, first of all, not even everything on the

earth is subservient to human will and command? In fact, there are many things that act counter to human choice. As for things of the heavens particularly, there exists just about no probability of their being subservient to human beings. The answer is that 'subjugation' really means to force something into doing a particular job in a state of virtual compulsion. So, subjugating the entire creation of the heavens and the earth for human beings means that the whole range of such creations was yoked in their service to bring all sorts of benefits to them. Out of these things, many were put in their service by subjecting them to their command as well, in that they could use them as and when they wished. But, there are other things that have been, of course, commissioned to serve them - which they are doing all right - but, such was the dictate of Divine wisdom, that they were not made subject to the command of human beings, for example, the heavenly creations, planets, stars, lighting, rains and similar others. Had they been subjugated to follow human orders, these elements of creation would have been affected by human temperaments, tastes and varying conditions. One human being would have wanted the sun to rise early while the need of the other would have it rise later. Someone would have asked for rains while the other, being in travel through an open field, would have opted for no rains. So, these divergent demands would have triggered operational malfunction in the workings of the universal heavenly system. Therefore, Allah Ta'ālā did put all these things into the service of human beings but did not make them subject to their will and command. This too is, in a way, subjugation. Allah knows best.

The word: اسباغ (*isbāgh*) in the next sentence of verse 20: وَأَسْبَغَ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعَمَهُ ظَاهِرَةً وَّبَاطِنَةً (and has perfected His blessings on you, both outward and inward) means to perfect, make complete, provide in great abundance to the last fill. The Arabic word: نِعَم (*ni'am*) means 'blessings' which human beings recognize through their senses, for instance, the beauty of shape and the symmetry of human limbs made into such proportion as would allow maximum functional movement causing no disfigurement of one's shape and looks. Similarly, provisions, property; wealth, avenues of economic opportunity, health and well being are also outward and perceived blessings. In the same way, making the religion of Islām easy to follow, being enabled to obey Allah and His Rasūl, the ascendancy of

Islām over other faiths and the support given to Muslims encountering enemies also come under the same outward blessings. As for inward blessings, they relate to the human heart, such as,'Īmān (faith), knowing Allah (*ma'rifah*), intellect, reason, good morals, the good fortune of having one's sins left unexposed and of one's crimes not punished instantly and many others.

The manifestations of Allah's knowledge, power and blessings are endless. These cannot by encompassed by anyone through speech, nor can any pen write them comprehensively. This has been stated in the verse: وَلَوْ اَنَّ مَا فِی الْاَرْضِ مِنْ شَجَرَةٍ اَقْلَامٌ (27) through a similitude. Says the similitude: 'If all trees that are on the earth were to be pens (or pens were to be made of all branches on them) and the ocean (converted into ink) is supported by seven seas following it, the words of Allah would (still) not come to an end.' The expression: كلمات الله (*kalimātul-lah , i.e. the words of Allah*) means His knowledge and wisdom (Rūḥ ul-Ma'ānī and Maẓharī) which includes the manifestations of Divine power and Divine blessings. Then, the 'seven seas' referred to here do not mean that there are seven seas present elsewhere. Instead of that, this is a manner of saying: Suppose if this ocean were to be replenished with seven more oceans, still then, all these words of Allah could not be committed to writing. Even the number of 'seven' appears here as a part of the example. No restriction is intended. Another verse of the Qur'ān proves it. There it was said:

قُلْ لَّوْ كَانَ الْبَحْرُ مِدَادًا لِّكَلِمٰتِ رَبِّیْ لَنَفِدَ الْبَحْرُ قَبْلَ اَنْ تَنْفَدَ كَلِمٰتُ رَبِّیْ وَلَوْ جِئْنَا بِمِثْلِهٖ مَدَدًا

Say, 'If the ocean were to be ink for the Words of my Lord, the ocean would have been consumed before the Words of my Lord are exhausted, even though we were to bring another one, like it, in addition' - Al-Kahf, 18:109.

In this verse, by saying: بِمِثْلِهٖ (*bimithlihī*: like it), a clear hint has been given that, no matter how many oceans are supposed, their collective writing fluid cannot circumscribe the Words of Allah. Rationally, the reason is obvious. The oceans may be added one after the other and be they seven or seven thousand, they shall still remain limited while the Words of Allah (knowledge) are unlimited. How, then, can something limited make an all-encompassing coverage of what is unlimited?

As it appears in some narratives, this verse was revealed in response to a question posed by Jewish priests. The reason which prompted them to ask this question was the verse of the Qur'ān where it has been said: وَمَا اُوْتِيْتُمْ مِّنَ الْعِلْمِ اِلَّا قَلِيْلاً (and you are not given but a little from the knowledge - Al-'Isra', 17:85). When the Holy Prophet ﷺ came to the blessed city of Madīnah, some Jewish priests visited him and it was about this verse that they confronted him by saying, "You say that you have been given a little from the knowledge. Is this what you are saying about your people, or have you included us too therein?" The Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "I mean all," that is, 'our people and the Jews and Christians as well.' Thereupon, increasing the tempo of their opposition, they said, "To us, Allah Ta'ālā has given the Torah which stands out as: تِبْيَانٌ لِّكُلِّ شَيْءٍ (an explanation of everything)." He said, "That too is but a little as compared to Divine Knowledge. Then, even the total knowledge contained in the Torah is not known to you either - what you go by is no more than a certain measure of what you need. Therefore, as compared to the Divine Knowledge, the collective knowledge of all Scriptures and Prophets is also nothing but a little." It was to support this statement that the verse: وَلَوْ اَنَّ مَا فِى الْاَرْضِ مِنْ شَجَرَةٍ اَقْلَامٌ (And if all trees that are on the earth were to be pens... - 27) was revealed. (Ibn Kathīr)

Verses 33 - 34

يَاَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوْا رَبَّكُمْ وَاخْشَوْا يَوْمًا لَّا يَجْزِىْ وَالِدٌ عَنْ وَّلَدِهٖ ز
وَلَا مَوْلُوْدٌ هُوَجَازٍ عَنْ وَّالِدِهٖ شَيْئًا ط اِنَّ وَعْدَ اللّٰهِ حَقٌّ فَلَا تَغُرَّنَّكُمُ
الْحَيٰوةُ الدُّنْيَا ســ وَلَا يَغُرَّنَّكُمْ بِاللّٰهِ الْغَرُوْرُ ﴿٣٣﴾ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ عِنْدَهٗ عِلْمُ
السَّاعَةِ ج وَيُنَزِّلُ الْغَيْثَ ج وَيَعْلَمُ مَا فِى الْاَرْحَامِ ط وَمَا تَدْرِىْ نَفْسٌ
مَّاذَا تَكْسِبُ غَدًا ط وَمَا تَدْرِىْ نَفْسٌ م بِاَيِّ اَرْضٍ تَمُوْتُ ط اِنَّ اللّٰهَ
عَلِيْمٌ خَبِيْرٌ ﴿٣٤﴾

O people, fear your Lord and fear a day when no father will suffice his son, nor will a son be sufficing his father in the least. Surely, the promise of Allah is true. So, the worldly life must not deceive you, nor you should ever be deceived about Allah by the Deceiver.

[33] **Surely, it is Allah with whom rests the knowledge of the Hour; and He sends down the rain and He knows what is in the wombs. And no one knows what he will earn tomorrow and no one knows in which land he will die. Surely, Allah is All Knowing, All Aware.** [34]

Commentary

In the first of the two verses cited above, the address is to common people, believing and disbelieving both. They have been served with a notice that they will face Allah and be accountable before Him for their deeds on the day of Judgement and that they should be prepared for it. It was said: يٰٓاَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوْا رَبَّكُمْ (O people, fear your Lord - 33). At this place, the text has not gone by the name of Allah Ta'ālā or His some other attribute. Instead of that, it has elected to mention the attribute of *Rabb* (master, sustainer of all, usually translated as Lord with this sense included therein). This serves as an indicator towards the nature of fearing Allah Ta'ālā. Hence, the command to fear given here is not the kind of fear one habitually has from some beast or enemy. The reason is that 'Allah Ta'ālā is your *Rabb*. He nourishes, sustains and cherishes you. He is the compassionate master. Why would someone apprehend this kind of danger from Him?' Instead of that, the fear mentioned at this place is the particular 'fear' that is necessarily generated because of the sublimity and awe of one's elders. It is in that sense that a son 'fears' his father and a student, his teacher. They are no enemies. They are not going to hurt them. But, their affectionate sublimity and awe reside in hearts and it is from there that these two make one obey a father and a teacher. This is what is meant at this place and it is being said that 'the sublimity and awe of Allah Ta'ālā should reign supreme over your hearts so that you can obey Him, perfectly and easily.'

The next sentence reads: وَاخْشَوْا يَوْمًا لَّا يَجْزِىْ وَالِدٌ عَنْ وَّلَدِهٖ وَلَا مَوْلُوْدٌ هُوَجَازٍ عَنْ وَّالِدِهٖ شَيْئًا (and fear a day when no father will suffice his son, nor will a son be sufficing his father in the least - 33). It means the father and son out of whom one is a believer and the other, a disbeliever. The sense is that a believing father would neither be able to remit or reduce the punishment of his disbelieving son nor would he be able to bring any benefit to him. Similarly, a believing son will be of no avail to his disbelieving father.

The reason for this particularization lies in other verses of the noble Qur'ān, and the narratives of Ḥadīth. There it has been clarified that, on

the day of Judgement, parents will intercede on behalf of their children and the children on behalf of their parents. Then, this intercession will turn out to be successful as well. Says the Qur'ān: وَالَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَاتَّبَعَتْهُمْ ذُرِّيَّتُهُمْ بِاِيْمَانٍ اَلْحَقْنَابِهِمْ ذُرِّيَّتَهُمْ (And those who believed and their children followed them in belief, We will join their children with them - 52:21) even though their deeds may not match the ranking of the deeds of their parents, but such would be the *barakah* of righteous parents that they too would be made to reach where their parents are. But, this is subject to the condition that the children should be believers - even though, their deeds may have suffered from some shortcomings.

Similarly, in another verse, it was said: جَنّٰتُ عَدْنٍ يَّدْخُلُوْنَهَا وَمَنْ صَلَحَ مِنْ اٰبَآئِهِمْ وَاَزْوَاجِهِمْ وَذُرِّيّٰتِهِمْ (the eternal gardens they enter, and the righteous of their fathers, spouses, and progeny as well - 13:23). Qualification refers here to their being believers.

Both these verses prove that, should parents and children and, in the same way, a husband and wife, share the common denominator of being believers, then, they will receive benefit from each other even on the day of Judgement. Similar to this, there are several narratives of Ḥadīth which report children interceding on behalf of their parents. Therefore, this rule set forth in the present verse (33) - that no father can bring any benefit to his son and no son to his father on the day of Judgement - can become operative only in a situation when one of them is a believer while the other, a disbeliever. (Maẓharī)

Special Note:

Here, it should be noted that the statement declaring the inability of a father to bring benefit to his son (لَا يَجْزِىْ وَالِدٌ عَنْ وَّلَدِهٖ - 3) has been made through a verbal sentence, but two changes were made while mentioning the other side of it. Firstly, it was described in the form of a nominal sentence. Secondly, the word: مولود (*maulūd*) meaning the born one, that is, a son, was employed instead of (ولد :*walad*) which is more common for 'son.' There is a wise consideration at work here. A nominal sentence is more emphatic as compared to a verbal sentence. By this change in the sentence, a hint was released towards the difference between a father and his children. The love of a father with his children is more intense. Contrary to this, the love of children does not reach this level of intensity even in the mortal world. However, the likelihood of either of the two

bringing any benefit for each other on the day of Judgement has been negated in the case of both, but the children's lack of ability to bring benefit has been described with added emphasis. Then, there is a particular wise consideration in electing the word: مولود (*maulūd*) instead of ولد (*walad*). The word, مولود *'maulūd'* denotes one's own son or children only. As for the word, ولد *'walad,'* it is general and includes the children of one's children as well. Thus, it is from another angle that the same subject has been strengthened. It is being virtually said, 'when even the son from the very loins of the father would be of no avail to the father, any expectations from the grandson and the great grandson are futile.'

In the next verse, the knowledge of five things has been declared as exclusive to Allah Ta'ālā and that no created being has that knowledge except Him and at this ends the Sūrah Luqmān:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ عِنْدَهُ عِلْمُ السَّاعَةِ وَيُنَزِّلُ الْغَيْثَ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا فِي الْأَرْحَامِ وَمَا تَدْرِي نَفْسٌ مَّاذَا تَكْسِبُ غَدًا وَّمَا تَدْرِي نَفْسٌ بِأَيِّ أَرْضٍ تَمُوتُ

Surely, it is Allah with whom rests the knowledge of the Hour, and He sends down the rain, and He knows what is in the wombs. And no one knows what he will earn tomorrow and no one knows in which land he will die. Surely, Allah is All Knowing, All Aware - 31:34.

Though, it has not been made explicit in the first three things that no one has their knowledge other than Allah, but the style of the statement is such that it seems to give the impression that the knowledge of these things rests limited to Divine Knowledge. As for the other two things mentioned later, there it has been explicitly said that no one has their knowledge other than Allah. These very five things have been called "keys to the Unseen" (مفاتح الغيب : *mafātiḥ al-ghayb*) in a verse of Sūrah Al-An'ām: وَعِنْدَهُ مَفَاتِحُ الْغَيْبِ لَا يَعْلَمُهَا إِلَّا هُوَ (And with Him are the keys of the Unseen. No one knows them but He - 6:59). In Ḥadīth, it has been referred as مفاتيح (*mafatīḥ al-ghayb*). Both مفاتح (*mafātiḥ*) and مفاتيح (*mafāt'īḥ*) are the plural forms of مفتاح (*miftāḥ*) meaning key which opens locks. It signifies sources of the Unseen that unravel its information.

The Issue of the 'Ilm ul-Ghayb (Knowledge of the Unseen)

Necessary details about this issue have been given under the commentary on verse 65: قُلْ لَّا يَعْلَمُ مَنْ فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْأَرْضِ الْغَيْبَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ (Say, 'No one

in the heavens and the earth has the knowledge of the Unseen except Allah.' - 27:65) of Sūrah An-Naml (Ma'ariful-Qur'ān, Volume VI). That the knowledge of the unseen is particular to Allah Ta'ālā in the absolute sense has been explicitly mentioned in this verse - and this has been the belief of the entire Muslim community from the earliest to the succeeding generations. As for the description of only five things particularly - that no created being has their knowledge and that it is Allah alone who knows these - it is not meant for particularization. Otherwise, it would pose a contradiction with the verse of Sūrah An-Naml quoted above. The fact is that these five things have been mentioned here to highlight their special significance.

There is a reason for this specific treatment and marked attention. Things of the Unseen that one is generally keen to find out are just these five. Then, there are astrologers and their kind who lay a claim to the knowledge of the unseen. Things they usually pick up to inform people about, and thereby prove that they are possessors of the knowledge of the unseen, are again these very five things. And in some narratives of Ḥadīth it has been reported that someone had asked the Holy Prophet ﷺ about these five things whereupon this verse was revealed and wherein it has been stated that the knowledge of these five is particular with Allah Ta'ālā. (Rūḥ ul-Ma'ānī)

As for the statement of the Holy Prophet ﷺ reported on the authority of Sayyidnā Ibn 'Umar and Ibn Mas'ūd رضی اللہ عنہم اجمعین in Ḥadīth: أُوْتِيْتُ مَفَاتِحَ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ إِلَّا الْخَمْس (I have been given the keys to everything except the five) (reported by Imām Aḥmad - Ibn Kathīr), the word: أُوتِيْتُ (I have been given) itself makes it all clear. It shows that the knowledge of unseen things other than these five which came to the Holy Prophet ﷺ came in the form of revelation (*waḥy*) from Allah Ta'ālā. Therefore, it is not included under the definition of the knowledge of the unseen ('Ilm ul-ghayb) because the news about things unseen given to the blessed prophets through *waḥy* (revelation) and to the men of Allah (*auliy'ā*') through *ilhām* (inspiration) come from Allah Ta'ālā. In terms of their reality, they are not the knowledge of the unseen based on which they could be called the possessors of 'the knowledge of the unseen' (*'ālim ul-ghayb*). They are, rather, أَنْبَاءُ الْغَيْب (news of the unseen). This is an area of Divine prerogative. Whenever Allah Ta'ālā so wills, and in whatever

measure He wills, He would bestow such information on His angels, messengers and favored servants. These are called "انبآء الغيب" (*anbā 'ul-ghayb*) in the noble Qur'ān, for instance: تِلْکَ مِنْ اَنْبَآءِ الْغَيْبِ نُوْحِيْهَآ اِلَيْکَ (These are some reports from the Unseen (events) which We reveal to you - 11:49).

Therefore, the Ḥadīth quoted above means that, no doubt, Allah Ta'ālā has made these five things so exclusive to Himself that no angel or messenger has been given their knowledge even as 'news' of the unseen. However, besides these, a fair amount of the knowledge relating to other unseen things is given out to the blessed prophets through the medium of *waḥy* (revelation).

Thus, from what has been discussed above, we now know one more reason why these five things have been mentioned specially.

A doubt and its answer

The cited verse proves that even in the absolute knowledge of the unseen which is an integral attribute of Allah Ta'ālā there are five particular things the knowledge of which is not given to any prophet even through *waḥy* (revelation). This demands that these things should never become known to anyone. However, countless events relating to men of Allah (*auliyā'*) in the Muslim community have been reported to the effect that somewhere they gave the news of rain, or pregnancy, or someone doing or not doing a deed in the future, or someone's exact place of death. And this foreboding turned out to be true as well when observed.

Similarly, there are some astrologers or people well versed in the art of divination through what is known as *Jafar* and *Ramal* who would come up with some bits of information about these things and these, at some times, would turn out to be true as well. This raises the question: How, then, could these five things remain exclusive to Divine Knowledge?

One answer to this question is the same as has appeared in details under our Commentary on Sūrah An-Naml (27:65, Ma'āriful-Qur'ān, Volume VI). A brief one has been given above to the effect that the Knowledge of the Unseen, in its real sense, is knowledge without the mediation of a physical cause - that is, *sans* medium, by itself. If these things are received by the blessed prophets through *waḥy* (revelation), by men of Allah (*auliya'*) through *ilhām* (inspiration) and by astrologers and other

claimants to divination or prediction through their calculations and physical causes, then, that is no knowledge of the unseen as such. Instead, these are 'news' of the unseen. If someone from among the creation of Allah were to receive such news relating to some partial or personal matter, it would not be contradictory of the cited verse. The reason is simple. According to the substance of the verse, the total knowledge of these five things, a knowledge which comprehends everything created as well as every relative condition, is something not given by Allah Ta'ālā to anyone, neither through *waḥy* (revelation) nor through *ilhām* (inspiration). That someone gets to receive some partial knowledge through *ilhām* (inspiration) in a stray case is not contradictory to it.

In addition to that, when we say *'ilm* (knowledge), it means absolute knowledge. That no one has except Allah Ta'ālā. The knowledge a man of Allah (*waliyy*) receives through *ilhām* (inspiration) is not absolute. Many probabilities of error or false perception exist in it. As for the information given out by astrologers and their ilk, it is a common observation that they hardly come up to the level of a single truth out of ten lies. How can that be called 'absolute knowledge'?

The issue of the Knowledge of the Unseen: An important note

My respected teacher, Shaykh ul-Islām Shabbīr Aḥmad 'Usmānī has made a brief but comprehensive comment in his explanatory notes on the Holy Qur'ān which helps remove all doubts and difficulties of the nature mentioned above. He has said that there are two kinds of *al-Ghayb* (the unseen): (1) Injunctions of the unseen (*al- aḥkām ul-ghaybiyyah*), such as, the injunctions originating from revealed laws that include the knowledge of the Being and attributes of Allah Ta'ālā as well and are called the knowledge of beliefs (*al-'aqā'id*). Also included therein are all injunctions of the Shari'ah or revealed law which tell us as to what sort of conduct meets the approval or disapproval of Allah Ta'ālā. It goes without saying that all these things belong to nowhere but the unseen.

(2) Cosmology of the unseen (*al-akwān ul-ghaybiyyah*), that is, the knowledge of the events occurring in the world. The knowledge of the unseen things of the first kind has been given by Allah Ta'ālā to His prophets and messengers. This is mentioned in the Qur'ān in the following words: فَلَا يُظْهِرُ عَلٰى غَيْبِهٖٓ اَحَدًا اِلَّا مَنِ ارْتَضٰى مِنْ رَّسُوْلٍ : '(He is the) Knower of

the Unseen. So He does not let anyone know His Unseen, except a messenger whom He chooses (to inform through revelation) - 72:26-27.

As for the unseen events and occurrences of the other kind, their knowledge - the whole of it - is just not given by Allah Ta'ālā to anyone. That remains categorically exclusive to Him as His intrinsic attribute. But, He gives partial knowledge of particular events when He wills and as much He wills. As such, the real knowledge of the unseen - all of it - remains exclusive to Allah Ta'ālā. Then, as is His customary practice, He reveals to the blessed prophets the knowledge of the injunctions of the unseen from out of His knowledge of the unseen - and this very knowledge is the purpose of their mission. Then, there is the partial knowledge of the events and occurrences of the world. That too is given by Allah Ta'ālā to prophets through revelation (*wahy*) and men of Allah (*auliyā'*) through inspiration (*ilhām*) at His discretion and to the measure of His choice. Thus, the part of knowledge so given is knowledge that has been bestowed on them by Allah Ta'ālā. In the real sense, this cannot be called: علم الغيب (*'ilm ul-ghayb*: the knowledge of the unseen). Instead, it is called: انباء الغيب : "*an[m]bā' il-ghayb*: the news of the unseen."

Special note concerning the words of the verse

In this verse, the objective is to describe the exclusiveness of the knowledge of these five things with Allah Ta'ālā in a manner that shows marked care and attention. This objective obviously required that five things should have been enumerated under a single head saying that their knowledge is exclusive to Allah Ta'ālā and that no created entity has been given their knowledge. But, in the cited verse, this was not done. Instead, as for the knowledge of the initial three things, it was mentioned positively as being exclusive to Allah - while, in the later two things, the statement was negative declaring that no one other than Allah has their knowledge. Let us go back to the initial three things. Here, a variation in style becomes fairly visible even in these three. We see that the knowledge of the Hour has been mentioned in the following manner: إِنَّ اللّٰهَ عِنْدَهٗ عِلْمُ السَّاعَةِ (Surely, it is Allah with whom rests the knowledge of the Hour). Then the mode changes. The second thing has been taken up in the form of a verbal sentence by saying: يُنَزِّلُ الْغَيْثَ (and He sends down the rain). It simply has no mention of the knowledge of rain. Instead, it mentions the sending down of rain. The third thing was mentioned with a

changed mode once again and it was said: وَيَعْلَمُ مَا فِي الْأَرْحَامِ (and He knows what is in the wombs). This change of modality can only be taken as a sampling of versatility in eloquence of speech. If one were to ponder, there are other elements of wisdom embedded here. The respected author of Bayān ul-Qur'ān has described these in his Tafsīr.

In brief, the last two things - what will one earn tomorrow and in which land will one die - are states connected with the human person. It was probable that one would try to seek the relevant knowledge about these. Therefore, in both these cases, the acquiring of such knowledge on the part of anyone other than Allah was negated. Also proved effectively through this statement was the absence of the knowledge of the first three things for anyone other than Allah. The argument was simple. Here is someone who does not know about his doings and earnings tomorrow. Then, he does not know the end of it all, the point when and where he will die. How could he, then, be expected to know the heavens and the coming of rains and the thing hidden in the dark layers of a mother's womb? Finally, when mentioning the last thing, it was said that one does not know the place of one's death. Yes, the text mentions 'place' only - although, one does not know one's time of death too just like the place of death. The reason is that the place of death, even if not known definitely, is something one can guess in terms of one's outward living conditions. One can naturally assume that the place where one is settled would be the place where one would die, and at the least, the place where one is to die is, after all, present somewhere in the world. This is contrary to the time of death. This time is in the future and the future is not here yet. So, a person who cannot know about his place of death, despite that it is present actually, how can it be imagined about him that he would come to know his time of death which simply does not exist then?

So, the negation of one thing here makes the negation of others obvious in the first degree. Therefore, the text takes up both these things in the negative mode. As for the first three things, they are by themselves outside the scope of human access under perceptible conditions. That human knowledge has nothing to do with it is all too clear. Therefore, a positive mode was chosen to describe their exclusiveness to Allah Ta'ālā.

Before parting with the subject, a few words about the use of nominal form in the first sentence and the verbal one in the later two sentences

may be useful. Perhaps, the wisdom therein is to suggest that the Qiyāmah or the Last Day is a definite imperative with no change in it. This is contrary to the coming of rain and the period of pregnancy. Their conditions keep changing - and the verbal sentence is suggestive of change. Therefore, that is what was used in both these cases. Then, we notice a delicacy of treatment within these two as well. When dealing with the conditions of pregnancy, what was mentioned was Divine knowledge: وَيَعْلَمُ مَا فِى الْاَرْحَامِ (and He knows what is in the wombs - 34) while in taking up the subject of the coming of rain, there is just no mention of knowledge. There is a reason for it. Here, by mentioning the sending down of rain, it was tacitly suggested that the rain to which are tied thousands of human benefits is something that comes at the bidding of Allah alone and that no one else exercises the ultimate control over it. As for the essential exclusiveness of its knowledge being with Allah, it already stands proved from the very context of the statement. ...

Alhamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Luqmān
Ends here

Sūrah As-Sajdah

[The Prostration]

Sūrah As-Sajdah is Makkī. It has 30 Verses and 10 Sections

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

Verses 1 - 3

الٓمّٓ ﴿١﴾ تَنْزِيْلُ الْكِتٰبِ لَارَيْبَ فِيْهِ مِنْ رَّبِّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿٢﴾ اَمْ
يَقُوْلُوْنَ افْتَرٰىهُ ۚ بَلْ هُوَالْحَقُّ مِنْ رَّبِّكَ لِتُنْذِرَ قَوْمًا مَّآ اَتٰهُمْ مِّنْ نَّذِيْرٍ
مِّنْ قَبْلِكَ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَهْتَدُوْنَ ﴿٣﴾

With the name of Allah, the Most Merciful, the All-Merciful

Alif Lām Mīm. [1] **(This) revelation of the Book - wherein there is no doubt - is from the Lord of the worlds.** [2] **Or, is it that they say, "he has fabricated it." On the contrary, it is the truth from your Lord, so that you warn a people to whom no warner has come before you; may be they take the right path.** [3]

Commentary

At this place, the word: نَذِيْر (*nadhīr*: warner) in: مَآ اَتٰهُمْ مِّنْ نَّذِيْرٍ (to whom no warner has come.. -3)means a *rasūl* or messenger.The sense is that no messenger had appeared amidst the Quraish of Makkah before the Holy Prophet ﷺ. This does not mean that the call of the messengers had just not reached them until that time, because it was clearly said in another verse of the Qur'ān: وَاِنْ مِّنْ اُمَّةٍ اِلَّا خَلَا فِيْهَا نَذِيْرٌ (And there was no community without a warner having passed among them - 35:24). In this verse, (i.e. the verse 35:24) the word:نَذِيْر (*warner*) appears in its general lexical sense, that is, one who calls people towards Allah, whether a messenger or prophet or one of their deputies, *khalīfah* or the *'ālim* of *dīn*. So, from this verse, it seems that the call of pure monotheism (*tauḥīd*) had reached all

communities and groups. That is correct in its place and certainly the dictate of universal Divine mercy. Commentator Abū Ḥayyān says that the call to *tauḥīd* and *'īmān* has never ceased in any time or place or people. And wherever a long time passed after the appearance of a prophet, it resulted in the dearth of those having the knowledge of the legacy of prophethood. Thereupon, some new prophet or messenger was sent. This requires that the call to *tauḥīd* should have reached the Arab peoples definitely, and much earlier. But, for this it is not necessary that the call should have been brought in by some prophet or messenger in person. It is possible that it may have reached through the learned serving as deputies to the prophetic mission. Therefore, the verses of this Sūrah, Sūrah Yā Sīn and others which prove that no *nadhīr* (warner) had appeared amidst the Quraish of Arabia before the Holy Prophet ﷺ must be approached with the necessary consideration that the word: نذیر (*nadhīr*) used there should mean a prophet and messenger in the technical sense denoting that no prophet and messenger had come amidst those people before the Holy Prophet ﷺ - even though, the call to *tauḥīd* and *'īmān* may have reached there too through other means.

Before the period of فترة *fatrah,* that is, before the appearance of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, it stands proved about some blessed souls who firmly adhered to the faith of Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm and Ismā'īl علیهما السلام. They believed in the Oneness of Allah and were averse to the worship of and sacrifices for idols.

Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī reports from the Maghāzī of Mūsā Ibn 'Uqbah about one such person whose name was Zayd Ibn 'Amr Ibn Nufayl. He had also met the Holy Prophet ﷺ before he was ordained as a prophet. But, it was still before his prophethood that he died in the year the Quraish had built the edifice of the Baytullah - and this happened five years prior to his prophethood. About him, Mūsā Ibn 'Uqbah says, 'He used to stop the Quraish from indulging in the worship of idols. He opposed the offering of sacrifices in the name of idols as an evil practice and would not eat the meat from animals slaughtered by the Mushriks.'

Abū Dāwūd Ṭayālisī has reported from Sayyidnā Sa'īd Ibn Zayd Ibn Amr رضی الله عنه, the son of Zayd Ibn 'Amr Ibn Nufayl, one of the celebrated ten (عشرۃ مبشرۃ) among the noble Ṣaḥābah, that he had submitted before the Holy Prophet ﷺ saying: "You already know about my father that he

adhered to pure monotheism and rejected idolatry. Can I, then, pray for his forgiveness?" The Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "Yes, for him the prayer of forgiveness is permissible. He will, on the day of Qiyāmah, rise as a community of his own." (Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī)

Similarly, Warqah Ibn Nawfal رضي الله عنه who was present during the initial period of the prophethood and the revelation of the Qur'ān was an adherent of pure monotheism (*tauḥīd*). He had expressed his resolve to help the Holy Prophet ﷺ but he died soon after. These examples prove that the people of Arabia were though not totally deprived of the Divine call to faith and monotheism, but that no prophet had appeared amidst them as such. Allah knows best.

All three verses cited above carry an affirmation of the veracity of the Qur'ān and the Prophet of Islam.

Verses 4 - 9

اَللّٰهُ الَّذِىْ خَلَقَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا فِىْ سِتَّةِ اَيَّامٍ ثُمَّ
اسْتَوٰى عَلَى الْعَرْشِ ؕ مَالَكُمْ مِّنْ دُوْنِهٖ مِنْ وَّلِىٍّ وَّلَا شَفِيْعٍ ؕ اَفَلَا
تَتَذَكَّرُوْنَ ﴿٤﴾ يُدَبِّرُ الْاَمْرَ مِنَ السَّمَآءِ اِلَى الْاَرْضِ ثُمَّ يَعْرُجُ اِلَيْهِ فِىْ
يَوْمٍ كَانَ مِقْدَارُهٗۤ اَلْفَ سَنَةٍ مِّمَّا تَعُدُّوْنَ ﴿٥﴾ ذٰلِكَ عٰلِمُ الْغَيْبِ
وَالشَّهَادَةِ الْعَزِيْزُ الرَّحِيْمُ ﴿٦﴾ الَّذِىْۤ اَحْسَنَ كُلَّ شَىْءٍ خَلَقَهٗ وَبَدَاَ
خَلْقَ الْاِنْسَانِ مِنْ طِيْنٍ ﴿٧﴾ ثُمَّ جَعَلَ نَسْلَهٗ مِنْ سُلٰلَةٍ مِّنْ مَّآءٍ مَّهِيْنٍ
﴿٨﴾ ثُمَّ سَوّٰىهُ وَنَفَخَ فِيْهِ مِنْ رُّوْحِهٖ وَجَعَلَ لَكُمُ السَّمْعَ وَالْاَبْصَارَ
وَالْاَفْـِٕدَةَ ؕ قَلِيْلًا مَّا تَشْكُرُوْنَ ﴿٩﴾

Allah is the One who created the heavens and the earth and all that is between them in six days, then He positioned Himself on the Throne. Other than Him, there is neither a guardian for you, nor an intercessor. Would you then not observe the advice? [4] **He manages (every) matter from the sky to the earth, then it (every matter) will ascend to Him in a day the measure of which is a thousand years according to the way you**

count. [5] **That One is the All-knower of the unseen and the seen; the All-Mighty, the Very-Merciful,** [6] **who made well whatever He created and started the creation of man from clay.** [7] **Then He made his progeny from a drop of semen, from a despised water.** [8] **Then He gave him a proportioned shape and breathed into him of His spirit. And He granted you the (power of) hearing and the eyes and the hearts. Little you give thanks.** [9]

Commentary

The length of the day of Qiyāmah

The text in verse 5 cited above says: فِىْ يَوْمٍ كَانَ مِقْدَارُهٗ اَلْفَ سَنَةٍ مِّمَّا تَعُدُّوْنَ (in a day the measure of which is a thousand years according to the way you count - 5). And it appears in a verse of Sūrah Al-Ma'ārij: ... (in a day the extent of which is fifty thousand years - 70:4).

A simple explanation of this is what appears in Bayān-ul-Qur'ān - since this day will be horrendous, people would find it very long. Then, this length will be felt in terms of one's measure of faith and deeds. Big criminals will find the day longer while the small ones will find it comparatively shorter, so much so that the day some would feel to be of a thousand years, to others, it would appear as of fifty thousand years.

Tafsīr Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī reports several other explanations from the 'Ulamā' and Ṣūfiyā'. But, all these are nothing but conjectures. Something which can be traced back to a proved meaning of the Qur'ān or something which can be believed in is just not there. Therefore, the most sound approach in this matter is the same as was taken by the early elders of Islam, the Ṣaḥābah and the Tābi'īn: They had left the knowledge of this difference of one and fifty to Allah without explaining it on the basis of human whims and, on their part, they had found it sufficient to say, 'we do not know.'

About it, Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Abbās ؓ said:

هُمَا يَوْمَانِ ذَكَرَهُمَا اللّٰهُ تَعَالٰى فِىْ كِتَابِهٖ اَللّٰهُ تَعَالٰى اَعْلَمُ بِهِمَا وَاَكْرَهُ اَنْ اَقُوْلَ فِىْ كِتَابِ اللّٰهِ مَالَا اَعْلَمُ

They are two days mentioned by Allah Ta'ālā in His Book. Allah Ta'ālā knows best about them and I dislike to say in the matter of the Book of Allah that which I do not know.

Everything is good in this world. Evil comes through its wrong use.

In verse 7, it was said: 'الَّذِىٓ اَحۡسَنَ كُلَّ شَىۡءٍ خَلَقَه :"Who made well whatever He created good. The reason is that Allah Ta'ālā has made whatever He has created in this world under the dictate of His wisdom, and under the essential consideration of what is beneficial for the whole system. Therefore, everything has a beauty of its own. And the most beautiful and better than all is the making of man as it was said: لَقَدۡ خَلَقۡنَا الۡاِنۡسَانَ فِىۡٓ اَحۡسَنِ تَقۡوِيۡمٍ (Surely, We did create man in the best of symmetry - 95:4).

Then there are creations other than man that may outwardly be taken as bad. In fact, dogs, pigs, snakes, scorpions and wolfs are commonly considered bad because they are either poisonous or beastly. But, in terms of the expedient benefits of the world as a whole, none of these is really bad. A proverbial poetic observation in Urdu puts it as:

نہیں ہے چیز نکمی کوئی زمانے میں......☆......کوئی برا نہیں قدرت کے کارخانے میں

There is nothing useless in the world
There is no one bad in the workshop of nature.

The author of Bayān ul-Qur'ān has said, 'the text's كُلُّ شَىۡءٍ (whatever) includes all substances and accidents, that is, also things which have corporeal substance, such as, animals, plants and minerals etc. as well as incorporeal things which include even morals and deeds. So much so that morals which are identified as bad - anger, greed, desire and their likes - are not bad in themselves. The bad about them emerges when they are used out of place. If they stay in their proper place, there is nothing bad in them. But, the sense being driven home here relates to the objective of their creation (*takwīn*)and introduction of these things - for that is nothing but good according to divine wisdom. However, the qualities of 'good' and 'bad' are attached to them in relation to the human acts and their effects on individuals. We can call it one's right or choice employed in doing something. Then, in those terms, everything is not good, in fact, it is circumscribed by a little detail, that is, whatever has not been allowed by Allah Ta'ālā is not good, but is, rather bad.' Allah knows best.

The sentence that follows next reads: وَبَدَاَ خَلۡقَ الۡاِنۡسَانِ مِنۡ طِيۡنٍ (and started the creation of man from clay - 7). Earlier, it was said that Allah Ta'ālā has made everything 'good' in this world. Mentioned thereafter was man,

the most beautiful of all. Then, to give expression to His most perfect power alongside, it was also said that the making of man as the most superior form of creation was not because the essential ingredient of his creation was most noble, elegant and superior, which may have made it so. In fact, as for the essential ingredient that went into his making, it was something as mean and lowly as the semen. Thereafter, the rest was a masterpiece of His perfect power and profound wisdom. It was this great combination that took something so low to such a height that man was rated as the most noble Divine creation.

Verses 10 - 22

وَقَالُوٓا ءَاِذَا ضَلَلۡنَا فِى الۡاَرۡضِ ءَاِنَّا لَفِىۡ خَلۡقٍ جَدِيۡدٍ ؕ بَلۡ هُمۡ
بِلِقَآئِ رَبِّهِمۡ كٰفِرُوۡنَ ﴿١٠﴾ قُلۡ يَتَوَفّٰٮكُمۡ مَّلَكُ الۡمَوۡتِ الَّذِىۡ وُكِّلَ
بِكُمۡ ثُمَّ اِلٰى رَبِّكُمۡ تُرۡجَعُوۡنَ ﴿١١﴾ وَلَوۡ تَرٰٓى اِذِ الۡمُجۡرِمُوۡنَ نَاكِسُوۡا
رُءُوۡسِهِمۡ عِنۡدَ رَبِّهِمۡ ؕ رَبَّنَآ اَبۡصَرۡنَا وَسَمِعۡنَا فَارۡجِعۡنَا نَعۡمَلۡ صَالِحًا
اِنَّا مُوۡقِنُوۡنَ ﴿١٢﴾ وَلَوۡ شِئۡنَا لَاٰتَيۡنَا كُلَّ نَفۡسٍ هُدٰٮهَا وَلٰكِنۡ حَقَّ
الۡقَوۡلُ مِنِّىۡ لَاَمۡلَئَنَّ جَهَنَّمَ مِنَ الۡجِنَّةِ وَالنَّاسِ اَجۡمَعِيۡنَ ﴿١٣﴾
فَذُوۡقُوۡا بِمَا نَسِيۡتُمۡ لِقَآءَ يَوۡمِكُمۡ هٰذَا ۚ اِنَّا نَسِيۡنٰكُمۡ وَذُوۡقُوۡا عَذَابَ
الۡخُلۡدِ بِمَا كُنۡتُمۡ تَعۡمَلُوۡنَ ﴿١٤﴾ اِنَّمَا يُؤۡمِنُ بِاٰيٰتِنَا الَّذِيۡنَ اِذَا ذُكِّرُوۡا
بِهَا خَرُّوۡا سُجَّدًا وَّسَبَّحُوۡا بِحَمۡدِ رَبِّهِمۡ وَهُمۡ لَا يَسۡتَكۡبِرُوۡنَ ﴿١٥﴾
تَتَجَافٰى جُنُوۡبُهُمۡ عَنِ الۡمَضَاجِعِ يَدۡعُوۡنَ رَبَّهُمۡ خَوۡفًا وَّطَمَعًا ۫ وَّمِمَّا
رَزَقۡنٰهُمۡ يُنۡفِقُوۡنَ ﴿١٦﴾ فَلَا تَعۡلَمُ نَفۡسٌ مَّاۤ اُخۡفِىَ لَهُمۡ مِّنۡ قُرَّةِ اَعۡيُنٍ ۚ
جَزَآءًۢ بِمَا كَانُوۡا يَعۡمَلُوۡنَ ﴿١٧﴾ اَفَمَنۡ كَانَ مُؤۡمِنًا كَمَنۡ كَانَ
فَاسِقًا ؕ لَا يَسۡتَوٗنَ ﴿١٨﴾ اَمَّا الَّذِيۡنَ اٰمَنُوۡا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ فَلَهُمۡ
جَنّٰتُ الۡمَاۡوٰى ۫ نُزُلًاۢ بِمَا كَانُوۡا يَعۡمَلُوۡنَ ﴿١٩﴾ وَاَمَّا الَّذِيۡنَ فَسَقُوۡا
فَمَاۡوٰٮهُمُ النَّارُ ؕ كُلَّمَاۤ اَرَادُوۡۤا اَنۡ يَّخۡرُجُوۡا مِنۡهَاۤ اُعِيۡدُوۡا فِيۡهَا وَقِيۡلَ

لَهُمْ ذُوقُوا عَذَابَ النَّارِ الَّذِىْ كُنْتُمْ بِهٖ تُكَذِّبُوْنَ ﴿٢٠﴾ وَلَنُذِيْقَنَّهُمْ
مِّنَ الْعَذَابِ الْاَدْنٰى دُوْنَ الْعَذَابِ الْاَكْبَرِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُوْنَ ﴿٢١﴾
وَمَنْ اَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ ذُكِّرَ بِاٰيٰتِ رَبِّهٖ ثُمَّ اَعْرَضَ عَنْهَا ۭ اِنَّا مِنَ الْمُجْرِمِيْنَ
مُنْتَقِمُوْنَ ﴿٢٢﴾

And they said, "Is it that when we disappear in the earth, shall we really come into a new creation?" Rather they are ones who deny the meeting with their Lord. [10] Say, "The angel of death who has been assigned for you will take you in full, then you will be brought back to your Lord." [11] And (you will wonder) if you see the sinners hanging their heads before their Lord (and saying,) "Our Lord, we have now seen and heard, so send us back, and we will do righteous deeds. Surely, (now) we are believers." [12] And if We had so willed, We would have given everybody his right way (by force), but the word from Me had come to pass: "I will certainly fill the *Jahannam* with jinn and human beings together.: [13]

So, have a taste, because you had forgotten the meeting of this day of yours. We have forgotten you. And taste the eternal punishment for what you used to do. [14] Only those people believe in Our verses who, when they are reminded of them, fall in prostration and pronounce the purity with praise of their Lord, and they do not wax proud. [15] Their sides remain apart from their beds.They call their Lord with fear and hope, and spend from what We have given to them. [16] So no one knows what delight of eyes has been reserved for them in secret, as a reward of what they used to do. [17]

So, can one who is a believer become like one who is a sinner? They cannot become equal. [18] As for those who believe and do righteous deeds, for them there are gardens to dwell, an honorable hospitality, for what they used to do. [19] And the ones who disobeyed, their abode is the Fire. Whenever they wish to come out from it, they will be turned back to it, and it will be said to them, "Taste the punishment of fire that you used to deny." [20] And We will certainly make them taste the nearer punishment before the greater punishment, so that they may return. [21] And who is more unjust than

the one who was reminded of the verses of his Lord, then he turned away from them. Surely, We have to take vengeance upon the sinners. [22]

Commentary

In verse 11, it was said: قُلْ يَتَوَفّٰكُمْ مَّلَكُ الْمَوْتِ الَّذِىْ وُكِّلَ بِكُمْ (Say, "The angel of death who has been assigned for you will take you in full" - 11). In the verse previous to it, the deniers of the Qiyāmah were warned and an answer was given to their wondering as to how would they be brought back to life once again after they had died and become dust. In the verse cited above, such people are being reminded, 'Think of your death which is, in itself, a great manifestation of the perfect power of Allah Ta'ālā. Your heedlessness and ignorance make you think that one's death comes all by itself, just like that. This is not how it is. In fact, fixed for your death there is a time with Allah and for this there is a standing system run through angels. Sayyidnā 'Izrā'īl عليه السلام is the foremost among them, the one who is the master-manager of death throughout the world. Whenever and wherever a person is destined to die, it is precisely at that time that he draws out his soul from his body.' This is what has been stated in the cited verse. It should be noted that مَلَكُ الْمَوْتِ (*malakul-maut*: angel of death) has been mentioned in the singular form. It means Sayyidnā 'Izrā'īl عليه السلام. Please compare it with another verse where it is said: الَّذِيْنَ تَتَوَفّٰهُمُ الْمَلٰٓئِكَةُ (the ones to whom the angels brought death - 16:28). Here, the word: مَلٰٓئِكَہ (*malā'ikah*: angels) has been used in the plural form. This releases the hint that Sayyidnā 'Izrā'īl عليه السلام does not do this alone. Many angels under him take part in accomplishing this duty.

Some details about the Exacting of Soul and the Angel of Death

Tafsīr authority, Mujāhid has said, 'before the angel of death, the whole world is very much like an open tray before a human being sprinkled in which there are grains and he picks up whichever he wants.' The same subject has also appeared in a *marfū' ḥadīth*, that is, traceable to the Holy Prophet ﷺ. (As mentioned by al-Qurṭubī in At-tadhkirah)

According to a *ḥadīth*, once the Holy Prophet ﷺ saw the angel of death standing behind the head of an Anṣārī *ṣaḥābī* on his death bed. He said, 'make it easy on my *ṣaḥābī*.' The angel of death said, 'Rest assured. I make it easy on every believer,' then, he added, 'just imagine the number of people living in towns or villages and in forests, mountains or waters, I

see every one of them five times a day, therefore, I am directly acquainted with everyone of them, young or old.' Then, he concluded by saying, 'O Muḥammad ﷺ, all this I am telling you about is nothing but what happens with the will and command of Allah. Otherwise, if I wanted to take the life of even a mosquito, I do not have the power to do so - unless there comes the very command of Allah Ta'ālā that I have to do it.'

The soul of animals: Does the angel of death exact that too?

From the *ḥadīth* report mentioned above, it seems that it is the angel of death who, subject to Divine permission, exacts the soul of a mosquito too. Imām Mālik رحمه الله تعالى has also said this while answering a question. But, some other reports show that this exacting of the soul is particular to human beings - because of their nobility and distinction. As for the animals, they will die under Divine will without the medium of the angel. (Mentioned by Ibn 'Atiyyah from al-Qurṭubī)

The same subject has been reported by Abū ash-Shaikh, 'Uqailī, Dailamī and others on the authority of Sayyidnā Anas رضي الله عنه narrating it from the Holy Prophet ﷺ. According to this report, the Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "All animals and insects keep glorifying Allah (for this is their life). When this glorification stops, Allah Ta'ālā takes their soul. The death of animals has not been entrusted with the angel of death". Another related *ḥadīth* has been reported from Sayyidnā Ibn 'Umar رضي الله عنه. (Maẓharī)

It appears in yet another *hadith*, 'when Allah Ta'ālā handed over to Sayyidnā 'Izrā'īl عليه السلام the charge of managing the death of everyone in the world, he pleaded, "O my Lord, You have put such a service in my charge that the entire race of the children of 'Ādam living in the world is going to give me a bad name to the extent that every time I am remembered, I shall be dubbed as evil." Allah Ta'ālā would say, "We have taken care of that by placing some obvious diseases and causes of death in the world due to which everyone will attribute death to these diseases and causes and you will remain safe from their adverse comments." (Al-Qurṭubī in his Tafsīr and Al-tadhkirah)

And Imām al-Baghawī reports on the authority of Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "All diseases, and things like pain and wound, are the universal message-bearers of death. They remind every human being of his or her death. After that, when comes

the time of death, the angel of death turns towards the dying person and says, 'O servant of God, how many notices have I served on you and how many message-bearers have I sent to you one after the other! All these diseases and accidents delivered at your doors were simply to warn you that you should get ready for death. Now, here I am after whom no bearer of some message will come to you any more. Now you have got to say yes to the order of your Lord necessarily, whether willingly or unwillingly." (Maẓharī)

Ruling:

The angel of death does not know the time of anyone's death in advance - until he is ordered to exact the soul of a certain person. (Deduced by Aḥmad and Ibn Abī ad-Dunyā from Ma'mar, Maẓharī)

Before approaching verse 16: تَتَجَافٰى جُنُوْبُهُمْ عَنِ الْمَضَاجِعِ يَدْعُوْنَ رَبَّهُمْ خَوْفًا وَّطَمَعًا (Their sides remain apart from their beds. They call their Lord with fear and hope - 16), it should be borne in mind that disbelievers, Mushriks and the deniers of the day of Qiyāmah were warned in the verses previous to it. After that, starting from: اِنَّمَا يُؤْمِنُ بِآيٰتِنَا (Only those people believe in Our verses - 15) mentioned there are special attributes of sincere believers and the high ranks reserved for them. Pointed to in the cited verse is one such attribute of these believers: They leave the comfort of their beds, rise and get busy with the remembrance of Allah in submission and supplication - because, they are apprehensive of His displeasure and punishment while remaining hopeful of His mercy and reward. This very combination of fear and hope keeps them returning to Dhikr and Du'ā' repeatedly, anxiously and animated at the same time.

The Ṣalāh of Tahajjud

The majority of commentators takes the expression denoting the leaving of beds and getting busy with Dhikr and Du'ā' to mean the Ṣalāh of *Tahajjud* and *Nawāfil* that are offered after rising from sleep (which is the saying of al-Ḥasan, Mujāhid, Mālik and al-Awza'i). And it is supported by narrations of Ḥadīth as well.

According to a report in the Musnad of Aḥmad, at-Tirmidhī, an-Nasā'ī and others, Sayyidnā Mu'ādh Ibn Jabal ﷺ narrates: 'Once I was in the company of the Holy Prophet ﷺ on a journey. One morning during the course of the journey when I was near him, I requested: "*Yā Rasūlallah*,

tell me to do something which helps me enter Paradise and keeps me away from Hell." He said, "You asked for something very difficult. But, for whomsoever Allah Ta'ālā makes it easy, for him it becomes easy." Then he said, "This is what you should do: Worship Allah and associate no one with Him, and establish Ṣalāh, and pay Ẓakāh, and keep the fasts of Ramaḍān, and perform the Ḥajj of Bạytullah." And then he said, "Here, now let me tell you about the gateways of righteousness: Fasting is a shield (that saves you from punishment). *Ṣadaqah* puts off the fire of one's sins - so does one's Ṣalāh in the middle of the night." And after having said that, he recited the cited verse of the Holy Qur'ān: تَتَجَافٰى جُنُوْبُهُمْ عَنِ الْمَضَاجِعِ (Their sides remain apart from their beds - 16).

Sayyidnā Abū ad-Dardā', Qatādah and Ḍahhāk رضی اللہ عنہم اجمعین have said that this attribute of sides remaining apart from beds also applies to those who make their Ṣalāh of 'Ishā' with Jamā'ah and then go on to make their Ṣalāh of Fajr with Jamā'ah. And according to a narration of Sayyidnā Anas ﷺ appearing in Tirmidhī with sound chains of authority, this verse: تَتَجَافٰى جُنُوْبُهُمْ (Their sides remain apart) was revealed about people who do not sleep before the Ṣalāh of 'Ishā' and keep waiting for the Jamā'ah of 'Ishā'.

And according to some other reports, this verse is about people who offer *nawāfil* between Maghrib and 'Ishā' (reported by Muḥammad Ibn Naṣr). And about this verse, Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ said: People who would, on waking up, remember Allah - lying, sitting and on sides - are also included therein.

Ibn Kathīr and other Tafsīr authorities have said that there is no contradiction in all these sayings. It is correct to say that this verse is inclusive of all - while the late night Ṣalāh remains the superior most. Bayān ul-Qur'ān has also opted for this approach.

And Sayyidah Asmā' bint Yazīd رضی اللہ عنہا narrates: The Holy Prophet ﷺ said, 'when Allah Ta'ālā will gather everyone from the first to the last, a proclaimer whose call will be heard by the entire creation will call: 'This day everyone on the plains of Resurrection will find out as to who is really deserving of honor and compliment.' Then, the proclaiming angel will proclaim: 'O people assembled on the plains of Resurrection, let those rise from among you, those whose attribute was: تَتَجَافٰى جُنُوْبُهُمْ عَنِ

الْمَضَاجِعِ (Their sides remain apart from their beds - 16)'. At this call, these people will stand up, though their number will be small. (Ibn Kathīr) And some words of the same narration say that these people will be sent to Paradise without reckoning. After that, all others will stand and face reckoning. (Maẓharī)

In verse 21:

وَلَنُذِيقَنَّهُم مِّنَ الْعَذَابِ الْأَدْنَىٰ دُونَ الْعَذَابِ الْأَكْبَرِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ

(And We will certainly make them taste the nearer punishment before the greater punishment, so that they may return),

the word: أَدْنَى (*adnā*) has been used in the sense of 'nearer' and العذاب الادنى (*al-'adhāb-ul-adnā*) denotes diseases, sufferings and calamities of the world that are made to befall a lot of people by Allah Ta'ālā in order to warn them against their sins. The purpose is to chasten and alert them enough so that they leave off their sins and thus earn their deliverance from the Great Punishment of the Hereafter.

Hence, this verse seems to tell us that all these sufferings, accidents, diseases and pains that inflict sinners in the world are nothing but a sort of mercy for them in as much as they help them get out of their heedlessness and save themselves from the punishment of the 'Ākhirah. However, for people who take no lesson even from such unwelcome happenings and fail to turn to Allah, for them, this punishment becomes twofold - first, the cash punishment right here in this world and then, the other being the Great Punishment of the Hereafter. As for the hardships of many kinds that come upon prophets and men of Allah, that is a separate matter. These hardships are a trial for them and trials are the source through which their ranks are raised. What is the hallmark of this trial? How do you recognize the quality of their response? If one were to observe such people even under the stress of calamities and hardships, it will be noticed that they have a kind of peace and tranquility emanating from their trust in Allah Ta'ālā. And it is Allah who knows best.

There are some crimes the punishment of which comes even within the mortal world much before the Hereafter.

The last sentence of the set of verses cited above reads: إِنَّا مِنَ الْمُجْرِمِينَ مُنتَقِمُونَ (We have to take vengeance upon the sinners - 22). Obviously, the word: الْمُجْرِمِينَ (*al-mujrimīn*: the criminals) includes all kinds of criminals.

Then, the word: إنتِقام (*intiqām*: revenge, retribution, return) is also general. It may be in the mortal world or in the Hereafter or in both. But, from some Ḥadith accounts it appears that there are three sins the punishment of which is experienced - before the Hereafter - right here in this world too. They are: (1) To strive against what is Right and True publicly with flags and slogans; (2) To disobey parents; (3) To help someone unjust or oppressive. (Reported by Ibn Jarīr from Sayyidnā Mu'ādh Ibn Jabal رضی اللہ عنہ)

Verses 23 - 30

وَلَقَدْ اٰتَيْنَا مُوْسَى الْكِتٰبَ فَلَا تَكُنْ فِىْ مِرْيَةٍ مِّنْ لِّقَآئِهٖ وَ جَعَلْنٰهُ
هُدًى لِّبَنِىْٓ اِسْرَآءِيْلَ ﴿٢٣﴾ وَجَعَلْنَا مِنْهُمْ اَئِمَّةً يَّهْدُوْنَ بِاَمْرِنَا لَمَّا
صَبَرُوْا ۛ وَكَانُوْا بِاٰيٰتِنَا يُوْقِنُوْنَ ﴿٢٤﴾ اِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ يَفْصِلُ بَيْنَهُمْ يَوْمَ
الْقِيٰمَةِ فِيْمَا كَانُوْا فِيْهِ يَخْتَلِفُوْنَ ﴿٢٥﴾ اَوَلَمْ يَهْدِ لَهُمْ كَمْ اَهْلَكْنَا
مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ مِّنَ الْقُرُوْنِ يَمْشُوْنَ فِىْ مَسٰكِنِهِمْ ؕ اِنَّ فِىْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيٰتٍ ؕ
اَفَلَا يَسْمَعُوْنَ ﴿٢٦﴾ اَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا اَنَّا نَسُوْقُ الْمَآءَ اِلَى الْاَرْضِ الْجُرُزِ
فَنُخْرِجُ بِهٖ زَرْعًا تَاْكُلُ مِنْهُ اَنْعَامُهُمْ وَاَنْفُسُهُمْ ؕ اَفَلَا يُبْصِرُوْنَ ﴿٢٧﴾
وَيَقُوْلُوْنَ مَتٰى هٰذَا الْفَتْحُ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ صٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿٢٨﴾ قُلْ يَوْمَ الْفَتْحِ
لَا يَنْفَعُ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْٓا اِيْمَانُهُمْ وَلَا هُمْ يُنْظَرُوْنَ ﴿٢٩﴾ فَاَعْرِضْ عَنْهُمْ
وَانْتَظِرْ اِنَّهُمْ مُّنْتَظِرُوْنَ ﴿٣٠﴾

And We did give the Book to Mūsā, so do not be in doubt about receiving it, and We made it a guidance for the children of Isra'īl. [23] **And We appointed leaders from among them who guided (people) under Our command, when they observed patience, and kept firm belief in Our verses.** [24] **Surely, your Lord will judge between them on the Day of Judgment in what they used to differ.** [25] **Has it not been a source of guidance for them as to how many generations We have destroyed before them who used to walk in their dwellings? Surely in this there are signs. So, do they not listen?** [26] **Have**

they not seen that We drive water to the dry land, then We bring forth crops thereby from which their cattle and they themselves have food? So, do they not observe? [27] **And they say, "When will this decision take place?"** [28] **Say, "On the day of decision their belief will not be of any use to disbelievers, nor shall they be given any respite."** [29] **So, turn away from them and wait. They (too) are waiting.** [30]

Commentary

The word: لقاء (*liqā'*) in the first verse (23) cited above: فَلَا تَكُنْ فِيْ مِرْيَةٍ مِّنْ لِّقَآئِهٖ (so do not be in doubt about receiving it) means meeting. Whose meeting with whom? In determining it precisely in the verse, the sayings of commentators differ. According to one of these, the pronoun in: لِقَائِهٖ (*liqā'ihī*) has been taken to be reverting to: اَلْكِتَاب (*al-kitāb*: the Book), that is, the Qur'ān, which releases the sense that 'the way Allah Ta'ālā gave the Book to Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام, you too should entertain no doubt about receiving your Book.' This is supported by similar words used about the Qur'an in another verse: وَاِنَّكَ لَتُلَقَّى الْقُرْاٰنَ (And indeed you [O Muḥammad] do receive the Qur'ān - An-Naml, 27:6) (Bayān ul-Qur'ān, Khulāṣah Tafsīr)

On the other hand, its *tafsīr* from Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās and Qatādah رضى الله عنهم اجمعين has been reported as follows: The pronoun in: لِقَائِهٖ (*liqā'ihī*: read as 'meeting him') reverts to Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام and given in this verse is the news that the Holy Prophet ﷺ will be meeting Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام and it has been said that he should have no doubt in the eventuality of his meeting with Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام. Accordingly, a meeting in the night of al-Mi'rāj (the ascent to the heavens) stands proved on the authority of Ṣaḥīḥ Aḥādīth. Then, also proved is the meeting on the day of Qiyāmah.

And Ḥasan al-Baṣrī رحمه الله تعالى explains it by saying: The way Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام was given a Book, then people belied and harassed him, the prophet of Islam too should anticipate that he will have to face similar treatment at the hands of his people. Therefore, he should not grieve over the pains inflicted by disbelievers. In fact, he should take that as the blessed practice of prophets, and endure.

Two conditions for the leader of any people

In the next verse (24), it was said:

وَجَعَلْنَا مِنْهُمْ اَئِمَّةً يَّهْدُوْنَ بِاَمْرِنَا لَمَّا صَبَرُوْا ۗ وَكَانُوْا بِاٰيٰتِنَا يُوْقِنُوْنَ

(And We appointed leaders from among them who guided (people) under Our command, when they observed patience, and kept firm belief in Our verses).

In this verse, two reasons have been given as to why religious leadership was bestowed on some of the sages of Banī Isrā'īl: (1) Observance of patience and (2) the certitude of Divine words. In terms of the Arabic usage, the sense of doing *ṣabr* or patience is very wide and general. Literally, it means to tie or to be firm. At this place, *ṣabr* means to stay firm on the implementation of Divine injunctions and to hold one's desiring self in check against the infringement of what Allah Ta'ālā has declared to be *ḥarām* (unlawful) or *makrūh* (reprehensible). This covers one's obedience to all injunctions of the Sharī'ah which is pragmatic perfection at its best. The second reason lies in their certitude - they are certain of the Divine words. This includes the initial understanding of the sense of the verses as well as the resulting certitude which emerges from such comprehension - both. This is intellectual perfection at its best.

In short, in the sight of Allah Ta'ālā, only those who are perfect both in *'ilm* (knowledge) and *'amal* (practice) are worthy of religious leadership. It is interesting here that perfection in practice has been made to precede perfection in knowledge while, usually *'ilm* (knowledge) precedes *'amal* (practice). This arrangement releases a strong hint, that is, a knowledge which has no corresponding practice with it is just not credible in the sight of Allah.

Ibn Kathīr has reported the following saying of some 'Ulamā' in his *tafsīr* of this verse:

بِالصَّبْرِ وَالْيَقِيْنِ تُنَالُ الْاِ مَا مَةُ فِی الدِّيْنِ

One can arrive at the station of leadership in religion only through *ṣabr* (patience) and *yaqīn* (certitude).

The word: جُرُزُ (*al-juruz*) in verse 27: اَوَلَمْ يَرَوْ اَنَّا نَسُوْقُ الْمَآءَ اِلَى الْاَرْضِ الْجُرُزِ فَنُخْرِجُ بِهٖ زَرْعًا (Have they not seen that We drive water to the dry land, then We bring forth crops thereby - 27) means barren land where trees do not grow.

A wise system of irrigation

Usually the Qur'ān mentions the irrigating of dry lands and the

growing of crops therein by saying that the land receives rain, and becomes moist and growth-worthy. But, there is no mention of rain in this verse. Instead of that, it has been said that water itself is directed to move aground towards the dry land and thereby bring forth the growth of trees. In other words, the rain is made to fall on some other land and it is from there that water is directed to move in the form of carrier channels on the ground all the way to the dry land that receives no rain.

There is a hint embedded here. Some lands are so soft that they cannot withstand rains. If regular rains were made to fall there, buildings may collapse or trees may be uprooted. Therefore, nature has made its own arrangements for such lands. As for the rain itself, it is sent on a land which is capable of holding it. After that, water is made to flow from here all the way to such lands which cannot withstand rains - like the land of Egypt. And there are commentators who have pointed out to some lands of Yaman and Syria as being referred to in this verse. (as reported from Ibn 'Abbās and Al-Ḥasan)

And as for the correct position, this subject includes all such lands, with the inclusion of the land of Egypt known for scanty rains particularly. But, water from the rains in the Abyssinian territory of Africa comes into Egypt through the Nile bringing with it particles of the indigenous red soil which is good for the growth of crops. Therefore, the people of Egypt, despite that they have no rains in their country, do benefit by a supply of new water and soil every year. فَتَبَارَكَ اللّٰهُ اَحْسَنُ الْخَالِقِيْنَ: (So, glorious is Allah, the Best of creators - 23:14).

Verse 28 carries a question posed by disbelievers: وَيَقُوْلُوْنَ مَتٰى هٰذَا الْفَتْحُ(And they say, "When will this decision take place?)Here, they are referring to the victory of believers against disbelievers as promised by the Holy Prophet ﷺ and are wondering about it since they see no traces of this likelihood anywhere around. Instead, they see Muslims as a group of people, scared, hiding,

To answer that, Allah Ta'ala said: قُلْ يَوْمَ الْفَتْحِ لَايَنْفَعُ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْٓا اِيْمَانُهُمْ (Say, 'On the day of decision their belief will not be of any use to disbelievers,'- 29) This amounts to saying: Why are you asking us about the day of our victory while that day is going to be a day of trouble for you? When victory comes to us, you would have already been overtaken by

punishment. May be, right here in this world - as it happened in the battle of *Badr* - or, in the Hereafter. And when the punishment of Allah seizes someone, then, no profession of faith at that time, no declaration of *'Īmān* at that stage is accepted. (as mentioned by Ibn Kathīr)

There are some others who have interpreted the 'day' in: مَتٰى هٰذَا الْفَتْحُ ("When will this decision take place?") as the day of Qiyāmah. The summarized explanation of this verse in Bayān-ul-Qur'ān appearing in the original edition of Ma'āriful-Qur'ān is based on this *tafsīr*. (The translation of *al-fatḥ* as 'decision' as given in the text admits both probablities)

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah As-Sajdah
Ends here.

Sūrah Al-Aḥzāb

Sūrah Al-Aḥzab is Madani and has 73 verses and 9 sections.

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 3

يَاَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ اتَّقِ اللّٰهَ وَلَا تُطِعِ الْكٰفِرِيْنَ وَالْمُنٰفِقِيْنَ ط اِنَّ اللّٰهَ كَانَ
عَلِيْمًا حَكِيْمًا ﴿١﴾ وَّاتَّبِعْ مَا يُوْحٰٓى اِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَّبِّكَ ط اِنَّ اللّٰهَ كَانَ بِمَا
تَعْمَلُوْنَ خَبِيْرًا ﴿٢﴾ وَّتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللّٰهِ ط وَكَفٰى بِاللّٰهِ وَكِيْلًا ﴿٣﴾

O Prophet, fear Allah and do not obey the disbelievers and the hypocrites. Surely Allah is All-Knowing, Wise. [1] **And follow what is revealed to you from your Lord. Surely Allah is All-Aware of what you do.** [2]

And place your trust in Allah, and Allah is enough as a guardian. [3]

Commentary

This is a Madanī Sūrah. Most of its subjects feature is the loveable persona of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and his special place with Allah. There it has been variously emphasized that showing reverence for him is obligatory and that causing any pain to him is *ḥarām* (forbidden). Then the rest of the subjects taken up in the Sūrah also serve as complements to the ultimate perfection of his station.

The background of revelation

Some narrations have been reported outlining the cause of the revelation of this Sūrah:

1. When the Holy Prophet ﷺ came to live in Madīnah after his

hijrah, the environs of the city were inhabited by Jewish tribes, some of whom being Quraiẓah, Naḍīr and Banū Qainuqā'. Being the prophet of mercy for all, he wished and tried that they somehow embrace Islam. It so happened that a few men from among these Jews started visiting him and posing as Muslims hypocritically. There was no faith in their heart. The Holy Prophet ﷺ took this as sufficient to begin with in the hope that the incidence of some people becoming Muslims would make it easier for him to invite others. Therefore, he used to welcome everyone from among these people particularly and warmly, so much so that even if they happened to do something bad, he would ignore it as a measure of religious expediency. It was because of this event that the initial verses of Sūrah al-Aḥzāb were revealed. (al-Qurṭubī)

According to another event reported by Ibn Jarīr from Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه, it was after *hijrah* that Walīd Ibn Mughīrah and Shaibah Ibn Rabī'ah from among the *kuffār* of Makkah came to Madīnah. They made an offer before the Holy Prophet ﷺ that they would let him have half of the entire wealth of the Quraish of Makkah, if he were to withdraw his claim of prophethood. And the hypocrites and Jews of Madīnah gave him a threat that they would kill him, if he did not withdraw from his claim and call. Thereupon, these verses were revealed. (Rūḥ al-Ma'ānī)

The third event has been reported by Tha'ālibī and Wāḥidī with no ascription of authority. This event, according to them, goes back to the time when a no war pact was signed between the pagans of Makkah and the Holy Prophet ﷺ at Ḥudaibiyah. It was at that time that Abū Sufyān, 'Ikrimah, Ibn Abī Jahl and Abū al-A'war Sulamī came to Madīnah. There they said to the Holy Prophet ﷺ, 'You stop speaking ill of our objects of worship - or simply say that they will also intercede on our behalf and bring benefits to us. If you do just that much, then we, on our part, will forget about you and your Lord - and the dispute will be all over.'

What they said was very unpleasant for the Holy Prophet ﷺ and for all Muslims who wanted to kill them. The Holy Prophet ﷺ said, 'I have made a peace pact with them, therefore, this cannot be done.' Thereupon, these verses were revealed. (Rūḥ al-Ma'ānī) Though, these reports are different but, in reality, there is no contradiction therein. These events could also be the cause of the revelation of the cited verses.

In these verses, the Holy Prophet ﷺ has been asked to do two things: (1) اِتَّقِ اللّٰهَ (*ittaqillah*), that is, 'fear Allah.' (2) لَا تُطِعِ الْكٰفِرِيْنَ (*la tuti'il-kafirin*), that is, 'do not obey the disbelievers.' The order to fear Allah was given for the reason that killing them was a breach of trust which is *ḥarām* (forbidden). As for the order of not obeying the disbelievers, it was given for the reason that the demands made by the infidels in all these events were unacceptable. Relevant details follow.

Explanation of Verses

In the opening verse of the Sūrah: يٰٓاَيُّهَا النَّبِىُّ اتَّقِ اللّٰهَ (O Prophet, fear Allah - 1), the wording of the address to the Holy Prophet ﷺ is significant. This is a singular honor given and the high regard shown to the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Nowhere in the entire Qur'ān, has he ever been addressed directly by his name - as has been the case in addressing other prophets. They have been addressed as يَا اٰدَمُ (O 'Ādam), يَا نُوْحُ (O Nūḥ), يَا اِبْرٰهِيْمُ (O Ibrāhīm), يَا مُوْسٰى (O Mūsā) and likewise, repeatedly. Contrary to this, wherever throughout the Qur'ān an address was made to the last among the prophets, may peace and the blessings of Allah be upon him, he was addressed by some title, like *nabiyy* (prophet) or *rasūl* (messenger of Allah) etc. The only exception is that of four occasions [3:144; 33:40; 47:2; 48:29] where the very purpose was to declare that he is the *rasūl* of Allah. It is there only that his blessed name has been mentioned - which was functionally necessary.

In this address, two orders were given to the Holy Prophet ﷺ: (1) That of fearing Allah in the sense that the peace pact entered into with the *Mushriks* of Makkah should not be contravened. (2) That of not yielding to what is said by the disbelievers, hypocrites and the Jews. At this point, a question may arise. Is it not that the Holy Prophet ﷺ is, after all, protected from all sins? Now, a breach of solemn pledge is obviously a major sin, and similarly, it is also a great sin to accept the offer of disbelievers and polytheists, quoted under the background of revelation. Since the Holy Prophet ﷺ was already protected from all kinds of sins, what was the need for such an order? According to Rūḥ al-Ma'ānī, these orders have the sense of instruction to abide by this conduct in future as well - as he did in the event concerned. And the order of: اِتَّقِ اللّٰهَ (*ittaqillah*: fear Allah) was made to come earlier for the reason that Muslims wanted to kill the *Mushriks* of Makkah with whom a treaty of peace was already

in effect. Therefore, the instruction to avoid a breach of pledge was made to precede through the expression: اتق الله (*ittaqillah*: fear Allah). As for the instruction of not yielding to the *kuffār* and *mushrikīn,* since no one had even wanted to do that, it was mentioned later.

And some respected commentators have said that, in this verse, though the address is to the Holy Prophet ﷺ, but the purpose is to warn the Muslim community at large. As for him, he was *ma'ṣūm*, that is, protected in the sense that there was just no probability of the contravention of Divine injunctions from him. But, the law is for the whole community. So, a corresponding mode was employed to make the community hear it and become alerted, and the address was made to the Holy Prophet ﷺ which enhanced the importance of the order significantly by suggesting: When, even the *rasūl* of Allah is the addressee of the order, how can any individual of the Muslim community remain exempted from it?

And Ibn Kathīr has said: In this verse, the real purpose of prohibiting the obedience of the disbelievers is that the Holy Prophet ﷺ should not consult with them or let them have the opportunity of sitting with him frequently, because such consultation or mutual interaction generally becomes the cause of ending up in a disposition favouring the acceptance of what they proposed. Though, there was no probability that the Holy Prophet ﷺ would do what they asked him to do, still, he was stopped from maintaining such liaison with them and from having them participate in his consultations. It is this idea that has been expressed through the word: إطاعة (*iṭā'ah*: obedience, submission or listening to and doing the bidding of someone), because such consultations and mutual interaction usually become the cause of ultimate acceptance. So, what has really been done here is that he has been prohibited from adopting the ways that could lead to such '*iṭāa'ah* or obedience. As for obedience itself, there was no probability that he would ever do that.

Now the second question that may arise here is that according to this verse, the disbelievers and the hypocrites were expected to propose things counter to the true Islamic position. To the extent of open disbelievers, such proposals coming from them were not improbable, and warning against yielding to them is understandable.But, if the hypocrites said anything counter to Islam, they would no longer remain hypocrites,

because in that case they would become open disbelievers. What, then, was the need to mention them separately? The answer is that it is possible that although the hypocrites may not have said anything against Islam very openly, but that they may have said something in support of other disbelievers.

And if the event featuring the hypocrites, described under the background of revelation, is taken to be the cause of revelation, it simply leaves no difficulty or vagueness behind - because, in terms of this event, the Holy Prophet ﷺ has simply been prohibited from dealing with Jews calling themselves Muslims in a spirit of extra civility and accommodation.

Later, towards the end of this verse, by saying: إِنَّ اللّٰهَ كَانَ عَلِيْمًا حَكِيْمًا (Surely, Allah is All- Knowing, Wise - 1), stated there is the wisdom of the order given immediately earlier - that is, 'fear Allah and do not obey the disbelievers and hypocrites.' The reason is that Allah Ta'ālā, who knows the consequences of everything, is most wise, and fully aware of what is better for His servants. This was said to counter some of the things put forth by the disbelievers or hypocrites which could generate for them certain advantages of lesser tension and increased mutual tolerance. But, from this Allah Ta'ālā prohibited him by declaring that even this tolerance of such people was counter to what was expedient under the circumstances and that such a policy was not going to end well.

What is said in verse 2: وَاتَّبِعْ مَايُوْحٰىٓ اِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَّبِّكَ ط اِنَّ اللّٰهَ كَانَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ خَبِيْرًا (And follow what is revealed to you from your Lord. Surely Allah is All-Aware of what you do.) is actually a complement of the first order. It means: Do not be beguiled or taken in by what the disbelievers and hypocrites say and do not agree or yield to it. Instead of all that, whatever you have been told by Allah through *waḥy* (revelation) remains the only thing you and your companions should follow. Since, the noble companions ؓ and Muslims at large are included under this address, therefore, by saying: بِمَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ (what you do) in the plural form at the end, everyone was alerted.

Once again, the last statement: وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللّٰهِ وَكَفٰى بِاللّٰهِ وَكِيْلًا (And place your trust in Allah and Allah is enough as a guardian- 3) is also a complement of the same order. Here it is being said: As for your approach, just pay no heed to what they say and, in order to succeed in your

objective, you should trust no one but Allah for He, in Himself and by Himself, is the ultimate doer, maker and fixer of all matters and things. With Him there, you do not need to acquiesce in the opinion of anyone.

Ruling

The cited verse proves that, in religious matters, even consulting with disbelievers is not permissible. In other matters relating to technical or functional experience, there is no harm in doing so. And Allah knows best.

Verses 4 - 5

مَا جَعَلَ اللّٰهُ لِرَجُلٍ مِّنْ قَلْبَيْنِ فِیْ جَوْفِهٖ ۚ وَمَا جَعَلَ اَزْوَاجَكُمُ الّٰٓئِیْ تُظٰهِرُوْنَ مِنْهُنَّ اُمَّهٰتِكُمْ ۚ وَمَا جَعَلَ اَدْعِيَآءَكُمْ اَبْنَآءَكُمْ ۭ ذٰلِكُمْ قَوْلُكُمْ بِاَفْوَاهِكُمْ ۭ وَاللّٰهُ يَقُوْلُ الْحَقَّ وَهُوَ يَهْدِی السَّبِيْلَ ﴿٤﴾ اُدْعُوْهُمْ لِاٰبَآئِهِمْ هُوَ اَقْسَطُ عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ ۚ فَاِنْ لَّمْ تَعْلَمُوْٓا اٰبَآءَهُمْ فَاِخْوَانُكُمْ فِی الدِّيْنِ وَمَوَالِيْكُمْ ۭ وَلَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ فِيْمَآ اَخْطَاْتُمْ بِهٖ ۙ وَلٰكِنْ مَّا تَعَمَّدَتْ قُلُوْبُكُمْ ۭ وَكَانَ اللّٰهُ غَفُوْرًا رَّحِيْمًا ﴿٥﴾

Allah has not made for any man two hearts in his (chest) cavity, nor did he make your wives whom you subjected to *ẓihār*, your mothers, nor did he make your adopted sons your (real) sons. That is (merely) a word uttered by your mouths. And Allah says the truth and He shows the (right) way. [4] **Call them by (the name of) their (real) fathers; It is more equitable in the sight of Allah. And if you do not know their fathers, then they are your brothers in faith and your friends. And there is no sin on you in the mistake you make, but in that which you do with intention of your heart and Allah is Most-Forgiving, Very-Merciful.** [5]

Commentary

Previous verses carried instructions to the Holy Prophet ﷺ asking him not to act upon their advice and not to be cajoled into what they wanted to achieve. In the cited verses, there is a refutation of three customs prevailing among disbelievers as well as of their false notions.

(1) During *Jāhiliyyah*, Arabs used to say about a person who was smarter than others that he had two hearts in his chest cage.

(2) Then they had a custom about their wives following which a person would declare his wife to be like the back of his mother, or some other part of the body, and go on to say, 'you are, for me, like the back of my mother.' This, in their usage, was called "*Ẓihār*." It is a derivation from: *Ẓahr,* which means 'back'. They thought that if a person who had done "*Ẓihār*" with his wife, she becomes *ḥarām* (unlawful) to him for ever.

(3) And then they had another custom under which one person would make the son of another his so-called or adopted son and who so would take a son in that manner, the boy would become known as 'his' son and would be addressed as such. According to their practice, this so-called or adopted son used to be recognized in all rules and regulations as a 'real' son. For instance, he would be regarded as a sharer even in inheritance, like a real offspring along with the children from his loins. Then, they would also regard the marriage relations of the so-called or adopted son as falling under the standard rule whereby the marriage with a category of certain women is unlawful. For example, as marriage with the wife of one's real son remains unlawful even after he has divorced her, they also took the divorced wife of the so-called or adopted son to be unlawful for that person.

Since the first of the three notions of the period of *Jāhiliyyah* were not tied up with religious belief or conduct, therefore, the Sharī'ah of Islām had no need to refute it. To determine whether there is just the one heart inside the chest or, may be, there are two as well was simply a case of anatomical inquiry. That it was obviously false was known to everyone. Therefore, most likely, the matter of its refutation was also introduced as a prologue to the other two issues and it was said: The way false is the saying of the people of Jāhiliyyah - that 'someone could have two hearts in his chest', the falsity of which is known to everyone - similarly, false are their notions in the matters of *Ẓihār* (falsely declaring one's wife unlawful to him like his mother) and adoption of sons.

As for the injunctions governing the two issues of *Ẓihār* and adopted son, these are among the social and familial issues that have a great importance in Islam - to the extent that even their subsidiary details have

been given in the Qur'ān by Allah Ta'ālā Himself. unlike other matters, this has not been left at the declaration of principles only with its detailed enunciation entrusted with the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Regarding both these issues, the people of Jāhiliyyah, following their baseless whims, had a bunch of self-made laws relating to the lawful and the unlawful, the permissible and the impermissible. It was the duty of the True Religion that it should refute these false notions and make the truth manifest. Therefore, it was said: وَمَا جَعَلَ أَزْوَاجَكُمُ الّٰئِي تُظٰهِرُوْنَ مِنْهُنَّ أُمَّهَاتِكُمْ It means: 'You are wrong in thinking that, should someone call his wife the equal or like of his mother, the wife does not go on to become unlawful for him for ever like his real mother. Just because you say so, a wife does not become a mother, in reality. Your mother is but she who gave birth to you.' Now, at least, the notion of the people of Jāhiliyyah that *Ẓihār* makes one's wife unlawful for ever is refuted by this verse. What happens next? Does saying so bring about any legal effect? The standing injunction in this connection appears in Sūrah al-Mujādalah [58:2-4] where saying so has been called a sin and abstention from it obligatory. And it is provided there that he who has made such a declaration should offer a *kaffārah* (expiation) of having done *ẓihār* after which having intercourse with his wife becomes lawful for him. The details of this issue will appear in the Commentary on Sūrah al-Mujādalah (Mā'ariful-Qur'ān, Volume VIII).

The second issue was that of the *mutabanna, i.e* adopted son. About that, it was said: وَمَا جَعَلَ أَدْعِيَاءَكُمْ أَبْنَاءَكُمْ (nor did he make your adopted sons your (real) sons - 4). The word: أَدْعِيَاء (*ad'iyā'*) is the plural of: دَعِيٌّ (*da'iyy*) which means a so-called son. The sense is that the way no man has two hearts inside him and the way by likening one's wife to one's mother, the wife does not become the mother - similarly, the so-called son does not become your real son. In other words, neither will he be entitled to a share in inheritance with other sons, nor the precepts of the unlawfulness of marriage will apply to him. For example, the way the divorced wife of a real son is unlawful for his father for ever, the divorced wife of an adopted son is not unlawful for his so-called father. Since this last matter affects many other matters, therefore, it was complimented by another injunction, that is, even an adopted son should be attributed to his real father, and not to the person who has adopted him - because, this spells out the danger of misgiving and confusion creeping in many matters.

There is a *hadīth* from Sayyidnā Ibn 'Umar ﷺ appearing in al-Bukhārī, Muslim and others in which it has been said: 'Before the revelation of this verse, we used to call Zayd Ibn Ḥārithah by the name of Zayd Ibn Muḥammad (because the Holy Prophet ﷺ had taken him in as his *mutabannā*, adopted son). After the revelation of this verse, we abandoned this practice.'

Ruling

This tells us about many people who call the children of others as 'son' which, if because of simple affection, not because of declaring him an adopted son or a *mutabannā* , then, this would though be permissible, still, it is not the better choice, because it looks like violating the prohibition, at least in appearance. (As in Rūḥ al-Ma'ānī from al-Khāfajī Alā al-Baiḍāwī)

And this is the same matter which, by throwing the Quraish of Arabia into deception, led them to commit a sin of terribly serious proportions to the extent that they started blaming the Holy Prophet ﷺ by saying that he had married the divorced wife of his 'son' ,while in fact, he was not his son, but only a *mutabannā* (adopted son) - something that will be mentioned in this very Sūrah a little later.

Verse 6

اَلنَّبِيُّ اَوْلٰى بِالْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ مِنْ اَنْفُسِهِمْ وَاَزْوَاجُهٗٓ اُمَّهٰتُهُمْ ؕ وَاُولُوا
الْاَرْحَامِ بَعْضُهُمْ اَوْلٰى بِبَعْضٍ فِيْ كِتٰبِ اللّٰهِ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ
وَالْمُهٰجِرِيْنَ اِلَّآ اَنْ تَفْعَلُوْٓا اِلٰٓى اَوْلِيٰٓئِكُمْ مَّعْرُوْفًا ؕ كَانَ ذٰلِكَ فِي
الْكِتٰبِ مَسْطُوْرًا ﴿٦﴾

The Prophet is closer to the believers than their own selves and his wives are their mothers. And those having mutual kinship are closer to one another (for the purpose of inheritance) than (other) believers and emigrants according to the Book of Allah, unless you do some good to your friends (by making a will in their favour). This had been written in the Book (the Preserved Tablet). [6]

Commentary

As stated earlier, most of the subjects in Sūrah al-Aḥzāb relate to the reverence of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and to the unlawfulness of causing pain to him. After the mention of pains caused to him by disbelievers and hypocrites at the beginning of the Sūrah, some instructions were given to the Holy Prophet ﷺ following which three customs of the Jāhiliyyah were refuted. Out of these, the last custom related to such a pain inflicted on the Holy Prophet ﷺ because the disbelievers had - at the time of the marriage of Sayyidah Zainab رضی اللہ عنہا, the divorced wife of Sayyidnā Zayd ﷺ, and on the basis of their pagan custom of *mutabanna* - blamed the Holy Prophet ﷺ of having married the divorced wife of his 'son.' Thus, from the beginning of the Sūrah up to this point, the subject concerned the pain caused to the Holy Prophet ﷺ. In the present verse (6), it has been stated that the reverence of and the obedience to the Holy Prophet ﷺ more than the whole creation is *wājib* (necessary in the degree of obligation)

The meaning of the expression:"The Prophet is closer to the believers than their own selves" mentioned by Maulānā Thanavī is based on the saying of Ibn 'Aṭiyyah and others which has been opted for by al-Qurṭubī and most commentators. According to it, every Muslim is duty-bound to obey and implement the command of the Holy Prophet ﷺ more than the command of his parents. If one's parents oppose any command of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, their obedience in that matter is not permissible. Similarly, the implementation of his command takes precedence even over the pulls of one's own desiring self.

In a *hadīth* of Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ﷺ appearing in the Ṣaḥīḥ of al-Bukhārī and others, the Holy Prophet ﷺ has been reported to have said:

مَا مِنْ مُّؤْمِنٍ اِلَّا وَاَنَا اَوْلَى النَّاسِ بِهٖ فِى الدُّنْيَا وَالْاٰخِرَةِ اِقْرَءُوٓا اِنْ شِئْتُمْ اَلنَّبِىُّ اَوْلٰى بِالْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ مِنْ اَنْفُسِهِمْ

There is no such believer for whom I am not the closest of all people in this world and in the world to come. Read if you wish (this verse of the Qur'ān to confirm): ... (The Prophet is ...).

The sense of the statement is that his affection for every Muslim exceeds the affection of the whole world and, as such, the necessary

outcome has to be no other but that every believer holds him dearer than anyone else - which is something also said in another *hadīth*:

لَا يُؤْمِنُ اَحَدُكُمْ حَتّٰى اَكُوْنَ اَحَبَّ اِلَيْهِ مِنْ وَّالِدِهٖ وَوَلَدِهٖ وَالنَّاسِ اَجْمَعِيْنَ

> None of you can become a believer until I become the dearest one to him, dearer than his father, and his son, and the whole world full of people/and the rest of the human beings, all of them. (Al-Bukhārī and Muslim - Maẓharī)

Said in the following sentence of the verse was: وَاَزْوَاجُهٗ اُمَّهٰتُهُمْ (and his wives are your mothers). Here, the reference to the blessed wives of the Holy Prophet ﷺ as mothers of the Muslim community means being mothers in terms of their respect and honor. Injunctions relating to the mother and her children, and those of the forbiddance of marriage, and of the absence of *ḥijāb* due to having the status of a *maḥram*, and of holding a share in the inheritance are injunctions which have nothing to do with it - as made explicit towards the end of the verse. As for the forbiddance of the marriage of the blessed wives with anyone in the Muslim community, this has been declared in a separate verse. Therefore, it is not necessary that even this forbiddance of marriage may be for the reason of being mothers.

Ruling

The cited verse proves that the least breach of etiquette in the case of anyone of the blessed wives رضی اللہ عنہن is forbidden for two reasons: (1) That they are the mothers of the Muslim community and (2) also because any pain caused to them would cause pain to the Holy Prophet ﷺ - which is forbidden in a far too extreme a degree.

The literal sense of the expression: اُولُوا الْاَرْحَامِ (*ulu 'l-arḥām*) in the next sentence of the verse: وَاُولُوا الْاَرْحَامِ بَعْضُهُمْ اَوْلٰى بِبَعْضٍ (And those having mutual kinship are closer to one another (for the purpose of inheritance) than (other) believers and emigrants) covers all relatives, whether they are those whom Muslim jurists call by the name of: عَصَبَات (*'aṣbāt*: agnates) or those who are juxtaposed as اُولُو الاَرْحَام "*ulu 'l-arḥām*" against عَصَبَات "'*aṣbāt*" in the light of a particular terminology. This terminology used by Muslim jurists, a later day product, is not what is meant here in the Holy Qur'ān.

Thus, it means that the relationship of the revered *rasūl* and his

blessed wives with the believers of the community is, though of a degree which precedes even that of a mother and father but, on the injunctions relating to the distribution of inheritance, this has simply no bearing. This inheritance, in fact, will be distributed only on the basis of lineal and closer relationships.

In the early stage of Islam, entitlement to shares in the inheritance was based on spiritual relationship. Later on, it was abrogated in favour of closeness of relationships which has been announced by the noble Qur'ān itself. This entire detail of the abrogating and the abrogated verses has appeared in Sūrah al-Anfāl (Mā'ariful-Qur'ān, Volume IV). And in that context, the mention of: وَالْمُهَاجِرِيْنَ (and the emigrants) after: مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ (and the believers) is there to highlight their distinction.

And some early commentators have said that, at this place, the Believers (*'al-mu'minīn'*) mean the Anṣār and the Emigrants (*Muhājirīn)* mean the Quraish. When placed in contrast with the *Muhājirīn*, it becomes clear that the word: *'al-mu'minīn'* (the believers) is for the *Anṣār*. In that case, this verse will be an abrogator of the rule of inheritance on the basis of the *Hijrah* (توارث بالهجرة) because, during the early stage of *Hijrah*, the Holy Prophet ﷺ had, by establishing brotherly relations between the *Muhājirīn* and the *Ansar*, ordered that they will also inherit from each other. This verse abrogated that rule of 'inheritance by virtue of Hijrah' (Qurṭubī)

Soon thereafter, it was stated: اِلَّا اَنْ تَفْعَلُوْٓا اِلٰٓى اَوْلِيٰٓءِكُمْ مَّعْرُوْفًا (unless you do some good to your friends (by making a will in their favour - 6). In other words, this means that inheritance as such will be received only on the basis of relationship - anyone unrelated will not be an inheritor - but, there may be people with whom you relate as your brothers in faith. If you wish to give them something, you have the right to do so. You could do so within your lifetime and give it to them as a gift, and it is also possible to make a will in their favour so that they get it after your death.

Verses 7 - 8

وَاِذْ اَخَذْنَا مِنَ النَّبِيّٖنَ مِيْثَاقَهُمْ وَمِنْكَ وَمِنْ نُّوْحٍ وَّاِبْرٰهِيْمَ وَمُوْسٰى
وَعِيْسَى ابْنِ مَرْيَمَ ۠ وَاَخَذْنَا مِنْهُمْ مِّيْثَاقًا غَلِيْظًا ﴿۷﴾ لِّيَسْئَلَ

الصّٰدِقِيْنَ عَنْ صِدْقِهِمْ ۚ وَاَعَدَّ لِلْكٰفِرِيْنَ عَذَابًا اَلِيْمًا ﴿٨﴾

And (recall) when We took from the prophets their covenant, and from you and from Nūḥ and Ibrāhīm and Mūsā and 'Īsā, the son of Maryam. And We did take from them a firm covenant, [7] **so that He (Allah) may ask the truthful about their truth. And He has prepared a painful punishment for the disbelievers.** [8]

Commentary

At the beginning of the Sūrah, by saying: وَاتَّبِعْ مَا يُوْحٰى اِلَيْكَ , the Holy Prophet ﷺ was asked to follow the Divine revelation sent to him. Then, in the previous verse: اَلنَّبِيُّ اَوْلٰى بِالْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ , the believers have been obligated with the implementation of the orders of the recipient of the revelation. It is to further confirm and emphasize these very two things that, in the present two verses as well, the same two subjects have been reiterated, that is, the recipient of the revelation has been obligated to follow the revelation received by him from Allah and the non-recipient of the revelation has been obligated to follow the recipient of the revelation.

The Covenant of the Prophets

The covenant taken from the blessed prophets, according to the cited verse, is in addition to the universal pledge taken from the entire creation as it appears in a saying of the Holy Prophet ﷺ reported by Imām Aḥmad:

خُصُّوْا بِمِيْثَاقِ الرِّسَالَةِ وَالنُّبُوَّةِ وَهُوَ قَوْلُهٗ تَعَالٰى وَاِذْ اَخَذْنَا مِنَ النَّبِيّٖنَ مِيْثَاقَهُمْ

"It was the prophets only from whom the covenant of messenger-ship and prophethood was taken, and this is the meaning of what Allah Ta'ālā has said:....(And when We took from the prophets their covenant...to the end of the verse).

This pledge from the prophets was the pledge of discharging the duties of prophethood and messenger-ship and of attesting to the veracity of each other and of being mutually helpful - as Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Abī Ḥātim and others have reported from Sayyidnā Qatādah رضي الله عنه. And according to one narration, it was also included in this pledge of the prophets that they should also proclaim that "Sayyidnā Muḥammad al-Muṣṭafā ﷺ is the messenger of Allah, and the last of the prophets. After him, there will be no prophet [مُحَمَّدٌ رَّسُوْلُ اللّٰهِ لَا نَبِيَّ بَعْدَهٗ]

And this pledge from prophets was also taken in eternity *(Azal)* at the same time when the pledge of: أَلَسْتُ بِرَبِّكُمْ (*alastu bi-rabbikum*: Am I not your Lord?) was taken from the created at large. (Rūḥ al-Ma'ānī and Maẓharī)

After having generally mentioned prophets, peace be on them all, before saying: وَمِنْكَ وَمِنْ نُّوحٍ (and from you and from Nūḥ... up to the end of the verse), five of them were particularly named on the basis of the unique distinction they have among the group of prophets. Then, even within those, it was by using the word: مِنْكَ (*minka*: from you) that the mention of the Holy Prophet ﷺ was made to precede that of others - although, his appearance in this world is later than all of them. The reason for this has been given in Ḥadīth itself:

كُنْتُ اَوَّلَ النَّاسِ فِي الْخَلْقِ وَاٰخِرَهُمْ فِي الْبَعْثِ (رواه ابن سعد وابو نعيم فی الحلية عن ميسرة الفجر والطبرانی فی الكبير عن ابن عباسؓ۔ مظهری)

'I am the first human being in the creation and the last of them in being sent (with the prophetic mission).' (Reported by Ibn Sa'd and Abū Nu'aim in Al-Ḥilyah from Maisirah al-Mafjar and At-Tabarānī in al-Kabīr from Ibn 'Abbās رضی اللہ عنہ - Maẓharī)

Verses 9 - 27

يٰۤاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوا اذْكُرُوْا نِعْمَةَ اللّٰهِ عَلَيْكُمْ اِذْ جَآءَتْكُمْ جُنُوْدٌ
فَاَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ رِيْحًا وَّجُنُوْدًا لَّمْ تَرَوْهَا ؕ وَكَانَ اللّٰهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ
بَصِيْرًا ﴿۹﴾ اِذْ جَآءُوْكُمْ مِّنْ فَوْقِكُمْ وَمِنْ اَسْفَلَ مِنْكُمْ وَاِذْ زَاغَتِ
الْاَبْصَارُ وَبَلَغَتِ الْقُلُوْبُ الْحَنَاجِرَ وَتَظُنُّوْنَ بِاللّٰهِ الظُّنُوْنَا ﴿۱۰﴾
هُنَالِكَ ابْتُلِيَ الْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ وَزُلْزِلُوْا زِلْزَالًا شَدِيْدًا ﴿۱۱﴾ وَاِذْ يَقُوْلُ
الْمُنٰفِقُوْنَ وَالَّذِيْنَ فِيْ قُلُوْبِهِمْ مَّرَضٌ مَّا وَعَدَنَا اللّٰهُ وَرَسُوْلُهٗۤ اِلَّا
غُرُوْرًا ﴿۱۲﴾ وَاِذْ قَالَتْ طَّآئِفَةٌ مِّنْهُمْ يٰۤاَهْلَ يَثْرِبَ لَا مُقَامَ لَكُمْ
فَارْجِعُوْا ۚ وَيَسْتَاْذِنُ فَرِيْقٌ مِّنْهُمُ النَّبِيَّ يَقُوْلُوْنَ اِنَّ بُيُوْتَنَا عَوْرَةٌ ؕ وَمَا
هِيَ بِعَوْرَةٍ ۚ اِنْ يُّرِيْدُوْنَ اِلَّا فِرَارًا ﴿۱۳﴾ وَلَوْ دُخِلَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ مِّنْ

اَقْطَارِهَا ثُمَّ سُئِلُوا الْفِتْنَةَ لَاٰتَوْهَا وَمَا تَلَبَّثُوْا بِهَآ اِلَّا يَسِيْرًا ﴿١٤﴾ وَلَقَدْ
كَانُوْا عَاهَدُوا اللّٰهَ مِنْ قَبْلُ لَا يُوَلُّوْنَ الْاَدْبَارَ ؕ وَكَانَ عَهْدُ اللّٰهِ
مَسْئُوْلًا ﴿١٥﴾ قُلْ لَّنْ يَّنْفَعَكُمُ الْفِرَارُ اِنْ فَرَرْتُمْ مِّنَ الْمَوْتِ اَوِ الْقَتْلِ
وَاِذًا لَّا تُمَتَّعُوْنَ اِلَّا قَلِيْلًا ﴿١٦﴾ قُلْ مَنْ ذَا الَّذِيْ يَعْصِمُكُمْ مِّنَ اللّٰهِ
اِنْ اَرَادَ بِكُمْ سُوْٓءًا اَوْ اَرَادَ بِكُمْ رَحْمَةً ؕ وَلَا يَجِدُوْنَ لَهُمْ مِّنْ دُوْنِ
اللّٰهِ وَلِيًّا وَّلَا نَصِيْرًا ﴿١٧﴾ قَدْ يَعْلَمُ اللّٰهُ الْمُعَوِّقِيْنَ مِنْكُمْ وَالْقَآئِلِيْنَ
لِاِخْوَانِهِمْ هَلُمَّ اِلَيْنَا ۚ وَلَا يَاْتُوْنَ الْبَاْسَ اِلَّا قَلِيْلًا ﴿١٨﴾ اَشِحَّةً
عَلَيْكُمْ ۖ فَاِذَا جَآءَ الْخَوْفُ رَاَيْتَهُمْ يَنْظُرُوْنَ اِلَيْكَ تَدُوْرُ اَعْيُنُهُمْ
كَالَّذِيْ يُغْشٰى عَلَيْهِ مِنَ الْمَوْتِ ۚ فَاِذَا ذَهَبَ الْخَوْفُ سَلَقُوْكُمْ
بِاَلْسِنَةٍ حِدَادٍ اَشِحَّةً عَلَى الْخَيْرِ ؕ اُولٰٓئِكَ لَمْ يُؤْمِنُوْا فَاَحْبَطَ اللّٰهُ
اَعْمَالَهُمْ ؕ وَكَانَ ذٰلِكَ عَلَى اللّٰهِ يَسِيْرًا ﴿١٩﴾ يَحْسَبُوْنَ الْاَحْزَابَ
لَمْ يَذْهَبُوْا ۚ وَاِنْ يَّاْتِ الْاَحْزَابُ يَوَدُّوْا لَوْ اَنَّهُمْ بَادُوْنَ فِي الْاَعْرَابِ
يَسْئَلُوْنَ عَنْ اَنْۢبَآئِكُمْ ؕ وَلَوْ كَانُوْا فِيْكُمْ مَّا قٰتَلُوْٓا اِلَّا قَلِيْلًا ﴿٢٠﴾ لَقَدْ
كَانَ لَكُمْ فِيْ رَسُوْلِ اللّٰهِ اُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لِّمَنْ كَانَ يَرْجُوا اللّٰهَ وَالْيَوْمَ
الْاٰخِرَ وَذَكَرَ اللّٰهَ كَثِيْرًا ﴿٢١﴾ وَلَمَّا رَاَ الْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ الْاَحْزَابَ ۙ قَالُوْا
هٰذَا مَا وَعَدَنَا اللّٰهُ وَرَسُوْلُهٗ وَصَدَقَ اللّٰهُ وَرَسُوْلُهٗ ۫ وَمَا زَادَهُمْ اِلَّا
اِيْمَانًا وَّتَسْلِيْمًا ﴿٢٢﴾ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ رِجَالٌ صَدَقُوْا مَا عَاهَدُوا اللّٰهَ
عَلَيْهِ ۚ فَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ قَضٰى نَحْبَهٗ وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ يَّنْتَظِرُ ۖ وَمَا بَدَّلُوْا تَبْدِيْلًا
﴿٢٣﴾ لِّيَجْزِيَ اللّٰهُ الصّٰدِقِيْنَ بِصِدْقِهِمْ وَيُعَذِّبَ الْمُنٰفِقِيْنَ اِنْ شَآءَ
اَوْ يَتُوْبَ عَلَيْهِمْ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ كَانَ غَفُوْرًا رَّحِيْمًا ﴿٢٤﴾ وَرَدَّ اللّٰهُ الَّذِيْنَ
كَفَرُوْا بِغَيْظِهِمْ لَمْ يَنَالُوْا خَيْرًا ؕ وَكَفَى اللّٰهُ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ الْقِتَالَ ؕ

وَكَانَ اللّٰهُ قَوِيًّا عَزِيْزًا ﴿٢٥﴾ وَاَنْزَلَ الَّذِيْنَ ظَاهَرُوْهُمْ مِّنْ اَهْلِ
الْكِتٰبِ مِنْ صَيَاصِيْهِمْ وَقَذَفَ فِىْ قُلُوْبِهِمُ الرُّعْبَ فَرِيْقًا تَقْتُلُوْنَ
وَتَاْسِرُوْنَ فَرِيْقًا ﴿٢٦﴾ وَاَوْرَثَكُمْ اَرْضَهُمْ وَدِيَارَهُمْ وَ اَمْوَالَهُمْ وَاَرْضًا
لَّمْ تَطَئُوْهَا ۚ وَكَانَ اللّٰهُ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَىْءٍ قَدِيْرًا ﴿٢٧﴾

O those who believe,(1) remember Allah's favour to you, when the forces (of the infidels) came upon you, and We sent upon them a wind, and the forces (of angels) you did not see. And Allah is watchful of what you do. [9] **(Recall) when they came upon you from above you and from below you, and when the eyes were distracted and the hearts reached the throats, and you were thinking about Allah all sorts of thoughts.** [10] **At that occasion, the believers were put to a trial and were shaken with a violent convulsion.** [11] **And (remember) when the hypocrites and those having malady in their hearts were saying, "Allah and His messenger did not promise us but deceitfully;** [12] **and when a group of them said, "O people of Yathrib (Madīnah), there is no place for you to stay; so go back." And a group of them was seeking permission (to leave) from the prophet, saying, "In fact our homes are vulnerable," while they were not vulnerable; they wanted nothing but to escape.** [13] **And if it (Madīnah) is entered (by the enemy, in their presence,) from all its sides and they are asked (to join) the mischief, they would readily commit it, and would not remain in them (their homes) but for a short while(2)** [14] **despite that they had already made a covenant with Allah that they would not turn their backs; and a covenant with Allah has to be answered for.** [15](3)

(1) These verses refer to the battle of Aḥzāb, also known as 'the battle of Khandaq' in which different tribes of Arabia, led by the Quraish invaded upon Madīnah, and the Holy Prophet ﷺ defended the city by digging a trench.

(2). It means that although they are escaping from the battle - field on the pretext that their homes are not safe, yet if the forces of the enemy invite them to join the battle against Muslims, after their having entered the city from all sides, they would easily join them in their mischief against Muslims, and would no more remain in their homes.It shows that their pretext is sham.

(3). That is, everyone who enters into a covenant with Allah, has to answer how he has fulfilled it.

Say, "Flight will never be of any use to you, if you flee from death or killing, and even then you will not be let to enjoy (life) but for a little while." [16] **Say, "Who is there to protect you from Allah, if He intends evil to you, or (who is there to prevent Him) if He intends mercy for you?" And beside Allah, they will not find for themselves either a friend or a helper.** [17]

Allah does know the ones from among you who prevent (others from joining the battle) and those who say to their brothers, "Come along with us," and who do not come to the battle but for a little while, [18] **(and that too) with a greed against you (i.e. to extract a share of spoils from you). But when fear comes, you will see them looking towards you, rolling their eyes, like the one who gets faint because of death. Then once fear is gone, they assail you with sharp tongues,in greed for the good (i.e. the wealth acquired as spopils).**(4) **These people did not accept faith (in real terms),therefore Allah has nullified their acts.**(5) **And all this is so easy for Allah.** [19] **They think that the coalition forces have not(yet) gone. And should the coalition forces come (again), they would like to be living in countryside among the Bedouins, asking (others) about your news. And even if they were to remain among you, they would not fight, but a little.** [20]

There is indeed a good model for you in the Messenger of Allah - for the one who has hope in Allah and the Last Day, and remembers Allah profusely. [21](6)

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(4). This verse has unveiled cowardice of the hypocrites on the one hand, and their greed for wealth on the other. The sense is that they are so coward that when an attack from the enemy is apprehended, they are frightened like a person who becomes faint in fear of death. But when the enemy is driven away by the Muslims, and the spoils of war are distributed, they come forward assailing the Muslims with their sharp tongues and claiming that the victory is achieved with their help, and therefore they deserve a share in the spoils.

(5). It means that virtuous acts deserve reward in the Hereafter only when they are accompanied by true faith in Allah, and since it has become evident that these hypocrites do not have true faith, even their virtuous acts will not be of any use to them in the Hereafter and will remain null and void.

(6). In the context of the battle of Aḥzab, this verse is initially meant to remind the hypocrites that they should have followed the example of the Holy Prophet ﷺ who stood firm in the battle,but according to the unique style of the Holy Qur'ān, the direction is given in generic terms to lay down a universal rule that the Muslims should follow the examples set by the Holy Prophet ﷺ in all matters of life.

And when the believers saw the coalition forces, they said, "This is what Allah and His messenger had promised us, and Allah and His messenger had told the truth." And it only increased them in faith and submission. [22]

Among the believers, there are men who came true to the covenant they had with Allah. So, some of them have fulfilled their vows(by sacrificing their lives in the way of Allah), and some of them are (still) waiting, and they did not change (their commitment) in the least. [23] (7) **(All this happened) so that Allah may give reward to the truthful for their truthfulness, and punish the hypocrites, if He so wills, or accept their repentance. Surely, Allah is Most-Forgiving, Very-Merciful.** [24]

And Allah has turned back the disbelievers with all their rage, having achieved no good. And Allah sufficed the believers against fighting. (8) **And Allah is Powerful, Mighty.** [25] **And He has brought those of the people of the Book who had backed them, down from their fortresses, and cast awe into their hearts, so as to make you kill some of them and take others as captives.** [26] **And He let you inherit their land and their homes and their wealth, and a land you have not trodden (so far). And Allah is Powerful to do any thing.** [27] (9)

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(7). This verse admires those companions of the Holy Prophet ﷺ who had not participated in the battle of Badr due to some valid excuses, and had vowed that whenever the next battle would come to happen,they would offer their lives in defence of faith.Then,some of them,like Sayyidnā 'Anas Ibn Naḍr ؓ and Muṣ'ab Ibn 'Umair ؓ fulfilled their vows by sacrificing their lives in the battle of 'Uḥud, while some others, like Sayyidnā 'Uthmān and Ṭalḥah ؓ remained alive, but eagerly waiting for having the honor of being martyred in the way of Allah.

(8). It means that Allah made a divine arrangement by sending a violent wind to the coalition forces which compelled them to go back, and thus the Muslims did not have to indulge in a regular battle, except to the extent of some individual encounters.

(9). These two verses refer to Banū qurayẓah, the Jewish tribe who had entered into a treaty with the Muslims not to fight against them, and not to support the enemies of the Muslims. But at the time of The battle of Aḥzāb, they violated the terms of the treaty and supported the coalition forces. Even earlier, they had been constantly conspiring against the Muslims to an intolerable extent. After the battle of Aḥzāb was over, the Holy Prophet ﷺ besieged the fortress of Banū qurayẓah, and finally, they had to surrender, and most of their men were killed, and the women and children were made captives. This event has been referred to in these verses.At the same time, Allah Ta'ālā has given a good news to the Muslims that they would conquer some other lands which they had not entered before.The words," and a land you have not trodden" refer to such future victories, especially to the conquest of Khyber that followed within a few years after the battle of Aḥzāb.

Commentary

Identified in the previous verses was the great station of the Holy Prophet ﷺ along with the instruction to Muslims that they should follow and obey him totally and perfectly. Congruent to this, these two full sections of the Qur'ān have been revealed about the event of the battle of al-Aḥzāb. Mentioned therein is the simultaneous attack of the combined forces of many groups of disbelievers and polytheists, their threatening encirclement, the subsequent blessings bestowed on Muslims by Allah Ta'ālā and the several miracles that issued forth at the hands of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Then, very much as a corollary to this, there are many instructions and injunctions relating to different departments of life. It is because of these very priceless instructions that great commentators have written about the details of the event of Aḥzāb with considered details at this place, particularly al-Qurṭubī, Maẓharī and others. Therefore, some details of the event of Aḥzab along with the instructions are being written here. Most of it has been taken from al-Qurṭubī and Maẓharī. That which has been taken from some other book carries the necessary reference.

THE EVENT OF THE BATTLE OF AL-AḤZAB

The word: الاَحْزَاب (*al-aḥzab*) is the plural form of: حِزْب (*ḥizb*) which means party or group. In this battle, the combined forces of different groups of disbelievers had, under a pact to eliminate Muslims, mounted an attack on Madīnah. Therefore, this battle has been named as the battle of al-Aḥzāb. And since, in this battle, a trench was also dug under the orders of the Holy Prophet ﷺ across the line of enemy attack, therefore, this battle is also called the battle of the Trench (Khandaq). The battle of Banū Quraiẓah too - which took place immediately after the battle of al-Aḥzāb and finds mention in the cited verses as well - that too, was actually a part of the battle of al-Aḥzāb, as it would appear through the details of this event.

In the year only next to the year the Holy Prophet ﷺ graced Madīnah after migrating from Makkah al-Mukarramah, the event of the battle of Badr came to pass. In the third year, came the battle of Uḥud. In the fourth year, it was this battle of al-Aḥzāb. Some narrations say that this event came to pass in the fifth year. Nevertheless, the attacks of the

disbelievers against Muslims had been continuing since the *hijrah* up to this time without any break. The attack on the occasion of the battle of al-Aḥzāb was made with full power, determination and mutual pledge. Therefore, this battle was the severest on the Holy Prophet ﷺ and the noble Ṣaḥābah as compared with other battles - because, the count of the attacking confederate forces of the disbelievers has been given as twelve to fifteen thousand. On the other side, there were Muslims, three thousand in all, and those too very ill-equipped. Then, the time was hard winter. The Qur'ān describes the horrible severity of this event by saying things like: زَاغَتِ الْاَبْصَارُ (the eyes were distracted - 33:10), بَلَغَتِ الْقُلُوْبُ الْحَنَاجِرَ (and hearts reached the throats - 33:10) and وَزُلْزِلُوْا زِلْزَالًا شَدِيْدًا (they were shaken with a violent convulsion - 33:11).

But, the way this time was the hardest on Muslims, they were also compensated at its best by Allah Ta'ālā. It was with His help and support that the matter ended in favour of Muslims in the form of such a great success and victory that broke the back of all hostile groups of Mushriks, Jews and Hypocrites leaving them just about incapable of even thinking of some attack against Muslims in the future. From that angle, this battle was the last armed confrontation between *kufr* and Islam - fought on the plains of al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah in the fourth or fifth year of *hijrah*.

The event began when about twenty men from the Jewish tribe of Banū Naḍīr and the tribe of Abū Wā'il who were morbidly hostile to the Holy Prophet ﷺ and Muslims at large reached Makkah al-Mukarramah. They met with Quraish chiefs and roused them to start a war against Muslims. The Quraish chiefs were under the impression that the way Muslims took their idol-worship to be *kufr* (disbelief, infidelity) and for which reason they regarded their religion as ill-founded, the Jews too would be no different and their thinking would be similar to it. If so, how could they hope for a common ground of unity from them? Therefore, these chiefs asked the Jews, "You people know that there is difference of religion and creed between us and Muḥammad ﷺ. And you are the people of the Book and the people of learning. First of all, you tell us as to which religion is better in your sight, ours or theirs?"

A lie is no novelty in the arena of politics!

The reply given by these Jews was totally contrary to their knowledge

and conscience. To them, they said, "Your religion is better than the religion of Muḥammad." Thereupon, the infidels of Makkah were somewhat satisfied. Still, the matter was taken to a future demonstration of intent. It was decided that these twenty visitors joined by fifty men from among the Quraish chiefs would go to al-Masjid al-Ḥarām, cling to the walls of the Baytullah by their chests and make a solemn pledge before Allah that they would continue fighting against Muḥammad ﷺ to their last man.

A marvel of the forbearance and magnanimity of Allah Ta'ālā!

Here are the enemies of Allah in the House of Allah clinging to the walls of the Ka'abah of Allah making a compact to fight a war against His Rasūl - and then return satisfied with a new passion for war! This is unique manifestation of the forbearance and magnanimity of Allāh Ta'ālā. Then, the ultimate end of this compact is not too far to find. It will appear towards the end of the narrative in that all of them bolted from this battle.

These Jews, after having made a pact with the Quraish of Makkah, reached the tribe of Ghiṭfān, a great warring tribe of Arabia. They told them that they and the Quraish of Makkah were in full agreement with the plan to eliminate the spreaders of this new religion (Islam) once for all with their combined power. They asked them too to join hands with them in that pact. Then, they also offered them a bribe. They promised to give them the total produce of dates in one year in Khaibar - according to some narrations, they promised the half of it to the tribe of Ghiṭfān. 'Uyaiynah Ibn Ḥiṣn, the chief of the tribe of Ghiṭfān, approved of his participation in the pact under this condition. Thus, they too became a part of the war effort.

Then, in accordance with the mutual pact, the Quraish armed force of four thousand men, three hundred horses and war supplies laden on one thousand camels came out of Makkah under the command of Abū Sufyān and stopped at Marr aẓ-Ẓahrān. Here, all tribes of Aslam, Ashja', Banū Murrah, Banū Kinānah, Fazārah and Ghiṭfān joined them. Their total number has been reported in some narrations as ten thousand, as twelve thousand in some others and as fifteen thousand in still other.

The most lethal attack on Madīnah

The armed force that fought against Muslims in the battle of Badr

was that of one thousand men. Then, the army that attacked in the battle of Uḥud had three thousand men. This time, the numerical strength of the attacking forces was greater than it was any time before that - the equipment and the combined power of the Arab and Jewish tribes were also to be counted as additional factors.

Three ingredients of Muslim war effort

When the information about this aggressive united front reached the Holy Prophet ﷺ, the very first verbal reaction came out from him in the words:

حَسْبُنَا اللّٰهُ وَنِعْمَ الْوَكِيْلُ

Allah is all-sufficient for us, and the best One to trust in - 3:173.

After that, he assembled opinion leaders from among the Emigrants and Helpers together and went into consultation with them. Although, the blessed recipient of *Waḥy* (revelation) really needs no consultation for he acts directly with the permission of Allah Ta'ālā. But, there were two advantages in having such consultation: (1) To initiate and establish the Sunnah (practice) of consultation in the Muslim community and (2) to revive mutual liaison and unity in the hearts of the believers and to persuade them to the need of helping and supporting each other. After that, they talked about matters of defence and the physical resources needed in fighting a war. Present among the group of consultants there was Sayyidnā Salmān al-Fārisī رضي الله عنه who had recently freed himself from the artificially imposed slavery of a Jew and had devoted himself to the service of Islam. He advised that in his country, the Persian kings have used trenches they arranged to be dug across the enemy line of attack. This had always helped stop the enemy. Accepting his advice, the Holy Prophet ﷺ ordered that trenches be dug - and he himself participated with others doing that.

The digging of trenches

It was decided to dig this trench on the entire passage way behind the mount of Sal' which could be used by the enemy to come into Madīnah from the north. The ground marking of the length and width of this trench was personally drawn by the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Beginning from Shaikhayn, this trench came as far as the western corner of the mount of Sal' and later it was extended to the intersection of the valleys of Buṭḥān

and Rātāunā. The total length of this trench was approximately three and a half miles. The precise measurement of the width and depth could not be ascertained from any narration. But, it is obvious that the width and depth would have also been special, of the kind the enemy would have not found easy to cross.

It has appeared in the narration of the event relating to Sayyidnā Salmān ﷺ digging the trench that he used to dig his allotted portion of the trench which, at the end of the day, came to be five yards long and five yards deep (Maẓharī). From this, it can be said that the depth of the trench was five yards.

The size of the Islamic 'army'

At that time, Muslims were a total of three thousand in number along with a total of thirty six horses.

Participant age of maturity was set at fifteen years

Some non-pubert children had also come out with the Islamic 'army' with the desire to defend their faith. The Holy Prophet ﷺ asked children below the age of fifteen years to leave. Those fifteen year old were accepted - included therein were Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Umar, Zayd Ibn Thābit, Abu Sa'īd al-Khudrī and Barā' Ibn 'Āzib رضى الله عنهم اجمعين. When this Islamic force was ready to march for battle, the hypocrites who normally kept a face and remained intermingled among Muslims, started backing out. Some bolted away incognito. Others came up with false excuses and tried to get the permission of the Holy Prophet ﷺ to go back. This was a new trouble that rose from within. Some of the cited verses have been revealed about these very hypocrites. (Qurṭubī)

Islamic nationality and Islamic unity do not contradict administrative and social division

For this Jihād, the Holy Prophet ﷺ appointed Sayyidnā Zayd Ibn Ḥārithah ﷺ as the standard bearer of the *Muhājirīn* and Sayyidnā Sa'd Ibn 'Ubādah ﷺ as the standard bearer of the *Anṣār*. At that time, the mutual brotherhood among the *Muhājirīn* and the *Anṣār* stood established on very firm foundations. All of them were brothers to each other. But, it was in view of administrative convenience that the leadership of the *Muhājirīn* was separated from the leadership of the *Anṣār*. From this, we learn that Islamic nationality and Islamic unity are

not contradictory to administrative and social division. In fact, by placing the burden of responsibility on each group helped strengthen the bond of mutual confidence and cooperation. And in the very first assignment, that is, in the digging of trenches before this battle, this mutual cooperation became all too evident as described below:

The job of digging the trenches was spread over the whole army

The Holy Prophet ﷺ divided the whole army of the *Muhājirīn* and the *Anṣār* in groups of ten men each and made every group of ten men responsible for digging forty yards of the trench. Since Sayyidnā Salmān al-Fārisī was the one who had advised the digging of the trench, knew the job, was strong and was neither one of the *Anṣār* nor one of the *Muhājirīn*, it created a sort of competition among the *Anṣār* and *Muhājirīn* for each of the two wanted to have him with them. The matter reached to the extent that the Holy Prophet ﷺ had to intervene in order to avoid any dispute. He gave his verdict by saying: سَلْمَانُ مِنَّا اَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ (Salmān is part of our family).

The discrimination of local and foreign in functional expertise

The universal wont in our time is that people do not like to treat those non-resident and non-local at par with them. But, this was a place where every group felt proud of having the competent one on their side and with them. It was for this reason that the Holy Prophet ﷺ included him in his family on his own and thus put an end to the dispute. Then, he practically picked up some *Muhājirīn* and some Anṣār to form a group of ten which included Sayyidnā 'Amr Ibn 'Awf ؓ, Sayyidnā Ḥudhaifah and others who were from among the *Muhājirīn*.

A great miracle

By chance, in the section of the trench entrusted with Sayyidnā Salmān and others with him, a huge, hard and glossy rock showed up. Sayyidnā Salmān's colleague, Sayyidnā 'Amr Ibn 'Awf ؓ says, "This rock broke our implements and we failed to cut it apart. Then I suggested to Salmān that though it is possible to dig the trench by- passing the huge rock and join it up with the main trench with a minor crookedness in it, but we should not deviate from the line drawn by the Holy Prophet ﷺ as based on our opinion. So, you go, tell the Holy Prophet ﷺ about the position here and get an order from him about what we should do now."

Divine reminders

It is strange that in this three and a half mile stretch of land no one from among the diggers of the trench faced any impediment which would render him helpless. The only one who did face it was Sayyidnā Salmān ﷺ who had given the advice of digging a trench and the whole project had started on his advice. To him Allah Ta'ālā showed that there was no way out even after digging and making a perfect trench - except turning to Allah Ta'ālā for help in the face of the failure of all implements and instruments. Here, these blessed souls were being taught that assembling material means to the measure of capacity and ability was obligatory, but to place trust in these was not correct. The trust of a believer - even after having assembled all possible material means - should be in Allah Ta'ālā alone.

Sayyidnā Salmān ﷺ presented himself before the Holy Prophet ﷺ and told him about what had happened. At that time, the Holy Prophet ﷺ was himself working in his part of the trench. He was busy hauling the dug out earth from the trench. Sayyidnā Barā' Ibn 'Āzib ﷺ says, "I saw him. Dust had covered his blessed body in a manner that the skin on his front and back was not visible." Rather than give Sayyidnā Salmān any advice or order, he accompanied him in person to the problem spot. With the ten Ṣaḥābah busy digging the trench with Sayyidnā Salmān, he too went down into the trench and joined the diggers. He took the pickaxe in his blessed hands, struck at the rock and recited the verse: تَمَّتْ كَلِمَةُ رَبِّكَ صِدْقًا (*tammat kalimatu rabbika sidqa*: And the Word of your Lord is perfect in truth... - al-An'ām, 6:115). With this one single stroke from it, one third portion of the rock was cut off and released from this rock was a streak of light. After that, he struck at the rock once again and recited the said verse upto the end, that is: تَمَّتْ كَلِمَةُ رَبِّكَ صِدْقًا وَّعَدْلًا (*tammat kalimatu rabbika sidqan wa 'adla* : And the Word of your Lord is perfect in truth and justice - al-An'ām, 6:115). Cut off with this second stroke was an additional one third portion of the rock which released a streak of light as before. The third time, he recited the same verse in full and executed the third stroke. With it, the rock was all finished. The Holy Prophet ﷺ came out of the trench, picked up the sheet wrap he had left at the edge of the trench and sat down on one side of it. At that time, Sayyidnā Salmān al-Fārisī ﷺ said, "*Yā* Rasulallah, every time struck at the rock,

ever time I saw a light coming out of the rock." The Holy Prophet ﷺ asked Sayyidnā Salmān, "Have you really seen this light?" He said, "*Yā Rasūlallāh*, I have seen it with my own eyes."

The Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "In the light that was released after the first strike, I saw the palaces of the cities of Yaman and those of Cyrus and Angel Jibra'īl told me: 'your *Ummah* will conquer these cities.' And when I struck at the rock the second time, I was shown the red palaces of the Byzantines and Angel Jibra'īl gave the good news, 'your *Ummah* will conquer these cities as well.' " After having heard this, all Muslims felt at peace and became assured of their great successes in the future.

Hypocrites throw taunts at Muslims for believing in their Prophet's promises

At that time, the hypocrites who were part of the digging operations of the trench, started asking other Muslims, 'It is strange that you people are not surprised at what Muḥammad ﷺ is telling you. Is it not that he is making all those baseless promises to you in the depth of this trench being dug in Yathrib where he is claiming to be seeing the palaces of Ḥīrah (in the South) and Madā'in (in the North)? And on top of it all, he is telling you that it is you people who are going to conquer them! Just look at yourself. Here you are, digging and digging, forgetful of all your needs. Frankly, you do not even have the time to take care of your human compulsions. Still, is it you who are going to conquer the countries of Cyrus and others?' Thereupon, it was about this very event that, in the twelfth verse cited above, it was revealed:

إِذْ يَقُولُ الْمُنٰفِقُوْنَ وَالَّذِيْنَ فِىْ قُلُوْبِهِمْ مَّرَضٌ مَّا وَعَدَنَا اللّٰهُ وَرَسُوْلُهٗٓ اِلَّا غُرُوْرًا

(And (remember) when the hypocrites and those having malady in their hearts were saying, "Allah and His messenger did not promise us but deceitfully; - 12). Here, in this verse, by saying: اَلَّذِيْنَ فِىْ قُلُوْبِهِمْ مَّرَضٌ (and those having malady in their hearts), reference is being made to the state of the same hypocrites hidden in whose hearts there was that disease of hypocrisy.

Just imagine the kind of time it was, a severe trial indeed. At stake was the very faith of Muslims for they had to believe in the word of the Holy Prophet ﷺ with the full backing of their mind and heart despite being threatened by disbelievers from all sides. They had no servants to

dig their trench for them. They were doing this hard work with their own hands braving the lashing winter. The unfriendly weather, the approaching enemy factor, theirs was a general climate of fear all around. In a situation like that, it was not easy to be sure of even one's defence and survival within whatever means were available. How could they go on from here and start believing in the good news of the conquests of the great kingdoms of Byzantine and Persia? But, the value of *'Īmān* (faith) is the highest of all deeds for the reason that they, even when facing totally contrary causes and conditions, did not have the least doubt or qualm of conscience about what the Holy Prophet ﷺ had told them.

Seniors must share every trial with their juniors - Great guidance for Muslims

Who does not know that the Ṣaḥābah of the Holy Prophet ﷺ were such selfless servants of the Holy Prophet ﷺ that they never wanted to have him do the hard labor of digging the trench with them, but it was the personal initiative of the Holy Prophet ﷺ that he chose to share this hard labor with his noble companions to mollify their hearts and teach them their essential lesson to put mutual brotherhood to practice. Of course, the noble companions staked their lives for the Holy Prophet ﷺ on the basis of his most perfect attributes as prophet and messenger of Allah, but of the many outward causes for this attachment, there was this major cause that he would be with them on all occasions facing all sorts of trials and pains like everybody else. When he did that, nobody ever thought of what we know as a class difference. There was no ruler and there was no one being ruled. There was no king around and there was no subject paying homage. Who was the man in power and who was the man from the masses? This kind of difference was unimaginable at that time. Unfortunately, from the time the Muslim wielders of power abandoned this Sunnah (the blessed practice of the Holy Prophet ﷺ,) that was the time these differences gushed forth bringing all sorts of tests and trials in their wake.

The master prescription of achieving success against something hard to accomplish

In the event mentioned above, the Holy Prophet ﷺ has recited the verse of the Qur'ān: تَمَّتْ كَلِمَةُ رَبِّكَ صِدْقًا وَّعَدْلًا لَا مُبَدِّلَ لِكَلِمٰتِهٖ (And the Word of your Lord is perfect in truth and justice. None is there to change His

Words - al-An'ām, 6:115) while striking at this invincible rock. This tells us that the recitation of this verse is a tested prescription for the resolution of something difficult.

The selfless mutual cooperation of the noble Ṣaḥābah

We already know that there were ten men appointed for the digging of the trench at every ten yards. But, it is obvious that some people are stronger and can finish their job sooner than others. The same was true here. The noble Ṣaḥābah who finished their allotted portion of digging would never go on to sit doing nothing and thinking that their duty was over. In fact, they would help out other Ṣaḥābah whose portion of digging was still incomplete. (Qurṭubī, Maẓharī)

Three and a half mile long trench was completed in six days

The outcome of the hard work put in by the noble Ṣaḥābah, may Allah be pleased with them all, was before everybody in six days in that such a long, wide and deep trench stood all completed within that short period of time. (Maẓharī)

An open miracle in the feast hosted by Sayyidnā Jābir ؓ

It was during the digging of this very trench that the well known event came to pass. On one of those days, when Sayyidnā Jābir ؓ looked at the Holy Prophet ﷺ, he felt deep down in his heart that he was really affected by hunger. He went to his wife and told her, "If you have something with you, cook it. I simply cannot bear by seeing this effect of hunger on his blessed person." His wife said, "We have about a *ṣā'* of barley grains in our home. I am going to grind them and make some flour." One *ṣā'* is equal to about three and a half kilograms in terms of our weights. So, his wife got busy with the grinding of barley, making flour, preparing dough and baking bread. There was a goat kid in the house. Sayyidnā Jābir ؓ slaughtered it, cooked the meat and was ready to go out and invite the Holy Prophet ﷺ in when his wife called out to him saying, "Look, there is a crowd of the Ṣaḥābah with the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Do something and somehow invite only the Holy Prophet ﷺ alone. Please, do not put me to disgrace by causing such a big crowd of the noble Ṣaḥābah come in with the Holy Prophet ﷺ." Sayyidnā Jābir ؓ, acting realistically, made the actual situation fully clear before the Holy Prophet ﷺ telling him that they had only that much of food in the house. But, as for the Holy Prophet ﷺ, he made a public announcement before the

entire work force asking everyone to come to the feast at Sayyidnā Jābir's home. Sayyidnā Jābir ﷺ was struck with wonder. When he reached home, his wife was extremely disturbed. She asked, "Did you tell the Holy Prophet ﷺ about the actual situation at home and the amount of food available?" Sayyidnā Jābir ﷺ said, "Yes, that I have told him." This put his wife at peace and she said, "Then we have nothing to worry about. The Holy Prophet ﷺ is our master. Let him have it the way he wishes."

Any more detail of the event is unnecessary at this place. It is enough to know the outcome that the Holy Prophet ﷺ took it upon himself to distribute the bread and curry to everybody with his own blessed hands and see that they are entertained and fed satisfactorily. As a result, the whole crowd ate to their fill. And Sayyidnā Jābir ﷺ says that "even after everybody having finished eating, our stock pot showed no dearth of meat, nor our kneaded flour any signs of decrease. All of us in the family ate to our heart's content and whatever remained we sent to the neighbours."

Thus, when the digging of the trench was finished within six days, the Confederate army arrived and the Holy Prophet ﷺ and his noble Companions, may Allah be pleased with them all, went into battle formation with the Mount of Sal' thoughtfully kept towards their rear.

The Jews of the tribe of Banī Quraiẓah break their pledge and join the Confederate aggressors

That was a time when a group of three thousand ill-equipped people standing up to fight against an equipped army of some ten to twelve thousand men was something far too wild to believe. On top of all that, there came up a new factor. Out of the Confederate forces, Ḥuyayy Ibn Akhṭab, the chief of the tribe of Banū Naḍīr who had contributed most in rallying everyone against the Holy Prophet ﷺ and his Muslim followers, took another step. He reached Madīnah and conspired to win over the Jewish tribe of Banū Quraiẓah over their side. The situation was that Banū Quraiẓah and the Holy Prophet ﷺ already had a peace treaty signed between them. This was a solemn undertaking and the two parties naturally had no apprehensions from each other. Ka'b Ibn Asad was the chief of the tribe of Banū Quraiẓah. Ḥuyayy Ibn Akhṭab went to see him. When Ka'b heard about his reported arrival, he had the gate of his castle closed, so that this man would not reach him. But, Ḥuyayy Ibn Akhṭab

hanged out there, he called and called and insisted that the gate be opened. Ka'b told him from inside the gate, "We have already made a peace treaty with Muḥammad ﷺ and we know of nothing from his side other than truth, honesty and strict adherence to the treaty right to this day, therefore, we are bound with this treaty and cannot join hands with you." For long, this dialogue between the two continued with Ḥuyayy Ibn Akhṭab insisting that the gate be opened and that Ka'b should talk to him and the later kept refusing to do that while staying inside the closed gate. But, consequently when Ḥuyayy Ibn Akhṭab challenged Ka'b's sense of shame in that he was treating a visitor in such a crude manner, the gate was opened. Once called in, Ḥuyayy Ibn Akhṭab painted such a rosv picture of his proposals that Ka'b ultimately fell into the trap laid out by him and gave his word that he would take part in the Confederate expedition. When Ka'b related what he had done before other chiefs of his tribe, they all said in one voice, "You did something terrible. You broke your pledge with Muslims for no reason whatsoever and that by going along with the other side you have exposed your own self to danger." Ka'b too was affected by their comments and even repented for what he had done. But, things had gone out of his control by that time and this very pledge-breaking finally went on to become the cause of the destruction of Banū Quraiẓah as it would be mentioned later.

At that particular time, when the Holy Prophet ﷺ and the noble Ṣaḥābah got this information, they were shocked by this breach of trust from Banū Quraiẓah. What worried them most was the strange situation created for them. They had a trench dug across the line of the marching forces of the Confederates who were coming from outside Madīnah. But, these Banū Quraiẓah people were right there inside Madīnah. How were they going to defend against them? About this when the Qur'ān says that the disbelieving forces of the Confederate army had overtaken you: مِّن فَوْقِكُمْ وَمِنْ اَسْفَلَ مِنكُمْ (from above you and from below you -10), Tafsīr authorities say that the expression: فَوْق (from above) means the Banū Quraiẓah and those who came from below them (اَسْفَل) mean the rest of the Confederates.

To find out the reality of this breach of trust and to assess the correct situation in the whole matter, the Holy Prophet ﷺ sent a deputation comprising Sayyidnā Sa'd Ibn Mu'ādh رضي الله عنه, the chief of the Anṣār tribe of

Aws and Sayyidnā Sa'd Ibn 'Ubādah, the chief of the tribe of Khazraj, to Ka'b in order to talk to him about the matter. The instruction given to them was that should the event of this breach of trust turn out to be incorrect, they were to tell the whole truth before all the Ṣaḥābah openly. And should it turn out to be true, they should, on their return, say something ambivalent which will be a message only we shall understand while the rest of the Ṣaḥābah will remain safe from facing any panic because of it.

When both these elders named Sa'd reached there, they saw open proofs of the breach of pledge all over which even went to the extent of hot exchanges of words between them and Ka'b. On their return, following the instructions given to them earlier, they reported back their findings in unclear words and thus informed the Holy Prophet ﷺ that the event of the breaking of the pledge was true.

At the time when the Jewish tribe of Banū Quraiẓah, once an ally of Muslims, also joined the war against them, something else started happening. The hypocrisy of people who posed to be a part of the Muslim community lost its cover. Some of them became far too vocal and started saying things against the Holy Prophet ﷺ as was mentioned earlier in: وَإِذْ يَقُولُ الْمُنٰفِقُونَ (and when said the hypocrites - 12). Then, they were others who cooked up all sorts of excuses to run away from the battlefield and sought the permission of the Holy Prophet ﷺ to do that - which has been mentioned in verse 13: إِنَّ بُيُوتَنَا عَوْرَةٌ (Our homes are vulnerable).

Now according to the present state of the battle front, the Confederate forces could not march in because of the trench with the Muslim army positioned on the other side. There was almost a continuous exchange of arrows between them all the time. This state of affairs dragged on for nearly a month. They could neither confront each other in some open or decisive battle, nor could they turn heedless towards the opponent for any extended period of time. Day and night, the Holy Prophet ﷺ and his noble Ṣaḥābah would stand guard by the trench. Although, the Holy Prophet ﷺ was personally involved in this hard task like everybody else, yet the thought that all his companions were suffering from extreme anxiety due to this impasse was very painful for him.

A strategic plan of the Holy Prophet ﷺ

It was already in the knowledge of the Holy Prophet ﷺ that the chief

of the tribe of Ghiṭfān had joined hands with these Jews as tempted by the greed of having the fruits and dates of Khaibar. He sent an emissary to the two chiefs of the tribe of Ghiṭfān, 'Uyaynah Ibn Ḥiṣn and Abū al-Hārith Ibn 'Amr, with the message: "If you leave the battlefield with your men, we shall give you one-third of the fruit of Madīnah." This negotiation was still on. The two chief had agreed and a peace treaty was close to be signed. But, as was his wont and habit, the Holy Prophet ﷺ decided to consult the noble Ṣaḥābah in this matter. He called the two Sa'ds, the chiefs of the tribe of Aws and Khazraj, that is, Sayyidnā Sa'd Ibn 'Ubādah and Sa'd Ibn Mu'ādh, and sought their advice.

The Faith, the Sense of Shame and the Granite of a Determination shown by a Ṣaḥābi of the Rasūl of Allah

Both of them said, "Ya Rasūlallāh, if you have orders from Allah Ta'ālā to do this thing, then, we cannot dare say anything. We shall accept. If not, tell us: Is it your personal opinion or you have devised this as a measure to save us from all this hardship and suffering?"

The Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "Neither is there a Divine order for it, nor do I have any personal inclination to do so. In fact, I have come up with this via media in view of your pain and suffering because you are surrounded from all sides. So, I simply wished to shatter the power of the adversary in this manner without losing any time." Sayyidnā Sa'd Ibn Mu'ādh ؓ said, "Ya Rasūlallāh, when we worshipped idols, we did neither know Allah nor did we worship Him. At that time, these people could not dare look at a single fruit of our city with greedy eyes - except that they be our guests and we offer some of it to them by way of hospitality, or that they would buy it from us and take it away with them. Today, when Allah Ta'ālā has, in His infinite grace, given us the ability of knowing Him, and has bestowed upon us the honor of Islam, shall we, on this day, let these people have our fruits and our wealth and our properties? We need no peace and compromise from them. As for us, we are not going to give them anything but the cutting edge of our swords - to the extent that Allah Ta'ālā Himself gives the ultimate verdict between us and them."

When the Holy Prophet ﷺ heard Sayyidnā Sa'd ؓ and saw this high determination and this great enthusiasm in the matter of his 'Īmān, he cast that thought of his aside and said, "You now have the right to do

what you wish." Sayyidnā Sa'd ﷺ took the peace treaty document from his blessed hands and erased the writing on it because it was not signed yet. 'Uyaynah and Ḥārith, the chiefs of the Ghiṭfān tribes who were present in the meeting ready to sign this treaty found themselves personally unnerved in their hearts at this demonstration of power and determination from the noble Companions of the Holy Prophet ﷺ.

The wound received by Sayyidnā Sa'd Ibn Mu'adh ﷺ and his prayer

On the other side, the activity of throwing arrows and stones on each other continued unabated. Sayyidnā Sa'd ﷺ had gone into the fortress of Banū Ḥārithah to see his mother where women had been housed under security. Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضی اللہ عنہا says, "At that time, I too was in the same fortress and the injunctions of *ḥijāb* for women were yet to be enforced. I saw that Sa'd Ibn Mu'ādh was wearing a small coat of mail from which his hands were protruding out rather awkwardly and his mother was telling him to make haste, go and join the men fighting with the Holy Prophet ﷺ. I said to his mother, "A larger coat of mail would have been better for him. I apprehend that his hands and feet showing out of his coat of mail may be exposed to danger." His mother said, "It does not matter. Whatever Allah has to do is what has to happen."

When Sayyidnā Mu'ādh ﷺ reached the battlefield, he was hit by an arrow which cut through his medial arm vein. At that time, Sayyidnā Mu'adh ﷺ made the following prayer:

> "O Allah, if there is yet another attack by the Quraish destined to come against the Holy Prophet ﷺ, please keep me alive for that, because I have no worthwhile wish left in me but that I fight the people who have caused all sorts of pain to the Holy Prophet ﷺ, expelled him from his homeland and falsified his person and mission. And if, in Your ultimate knowledge, this process of war has come to an end, please bless me with the death of a martyr in the way of Allah - but, let not death come to me until such time that the treachery of Banī Quraiẓah is avenged as the parting delight of my eyes."

Allah Ta'ālā answered both these prayers from him. This event of al-Aḥzāb was made to be the last attack of the disbelievers. After that, began the period of Muslim victories. First came Khaibar, then Makkah al-Mukarramah and then other areas. As for the event relating to Banū

Quraiẓah, it follows later as to how they were brought forth as captives and their case was entrusted with none else but Sayyidnā Sa'd Ibn Mu'ādh ﷺ for the final verdict. It was in accordance with his verdict that their men were killed and their women and children were taken prisoners.

During this event of al-Aḥzāb, the noble Ṣaḥābah and the Holy Prophet ﷺ had to maintain an all-night vigilance throughout the trench area. The slightest relaxation at any time had to be broken at the faintest sound of commotion from any side. In fact, the Holy Prophet ﷺ would himself put his arms back on and come out in the battle area. Umm ul-Mu'minīn Sayyidah Umm Salamah رضی اللہ عنہا says, "Every single night, this would happen several times that he would come in for a little rest and then heard some sound and went out immediately. The same thing happened again. The moment he would put his back for rest, he would hear some sound and leave as usual."

Umm al-Mu'minīn Sayyidah Umm Salamah رضی اللہ عنہا also says, "I have been with the Holy Prophet ﷺ in many battles such as Muraisī', Khaibar, Ḥudaibiyah, the battles of the conquest of Makkah and Ḥunain. None of these caused more hardship on the Holy Prophet ﷺ as did the battle of Khandaq. Muslims also received a lot more wounds in this battle. Then, they were hit by the severity of the winter chill as well. Furthermore, their circumstances were extremely straightened in terms of food and water available to them. (Maẓharī)

The Holy Prophet ﷺ had to miss four Ṣalāhs in this Jihād

One of those days, the confronting disbelievers decided to launch a joint and simultaneous attack and force their way ahead by somehow crossing the trench. Once they had resolved to do that, they threw themselves dauntlessly against the Muslims and their archers rained their arrows so incessantly that the Holy Prophet ﷺ and his noble Ṣaḥābah had to remain so engaged throughout the day that they did not find any respite to even make their Ṣalāh. As a result, four Ṣalāhs missed during the day had to be performed at the time of 'Ishā'.

The prayers of the Holy Prophet ﷺ

When things became unbearably hard on Muslims, the Holy Prophet ﷺ prayed against the Confederate forces of the disbelievers, doing that for three days consecutively on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday inside

Masjid al-Fatḥ imploring Allah Ta'ālā to bring defeat on the Confederates and victory for Muslims. It was on the third day, on Wednesday between Ẓuhr and 'Āṣr that the prayer was answered. Pleased, the Holy Prophet ﷺ came to his noble Ṣaḥābah and gave them the glad tiding of victory. They say that after that time no Muslim faced any hardship any more. (Maẓharī)

The unraveling of the causes of victory

In the combined forces of the enemy, the tribe of Ghiṭfān was a power to reckon with. It was the most perfect power of Allah Ta'ālā that put the light of faith in the heart of Nu'aim Ibn Mas'ūd who, as destiny would have it, was one of them. He presented himself before the Holy Prophet ﷺ, confessed to his faith in Islam and told him that no one from among his people is aware of the fact that he has become a Muslim. Then, he wished that he be told as to how he could serve Islam. The Holy Prophet ﷺ told him, 'You being all alone here would not be able to do anything worthwhile. If you can go back to your people, be with them and still do something in defence of Islam, then, go ahead and do it.' Nu'aim Ibn Mas'ūd was an intelligent man. He conceived of a plan of action in his heart and sought the permission of the Holy Prophet ﷺ to be given the choice of saying what is expedient when he reaches those people. He gave the permission.

From here, Nu'aim Ibn Mas'ūd went to see the tribe of Banū Quraiẓah with whom he had age-old relations since the time of Jāhiliyyah. He said to them: 'O people of Banū Quraiẓah, you know that I am an old friend of yours.' They said, 'We have no doubt about your friendship.' After that, Sayyidnā Nu'aim Ibn Mas'ūd رضي الله عنه addressed the chiefs of Banū Quraiẓah as a well-wisher and asked them, 'You know that none of us - be they the Quraish of Makkah or our tribe of Ghiṭfān or the several other Jewish tribes - have their homes here. If these people face defeat and run, they do not lose much. Your case is different from all of them. Madīnah is your home. Your women and your properties are all here. Now, if you were to participate in the war effort with them and if, later, when these people taste defeat and run, what would happen to you? Would you be able to fight against the Muslims all by yourselves?

Therefore, as one who wishes the best for you, I advise you not to take part in the joint war effort with them until such time that they do not put

with you a certain number of their selected chiefs as ransom and guarantee that they would not throw you all at the mercy of Muslims and run.' The people of Banū Quraiẓah found this advice good. They appreciated it and said so before him.

After that, Nu'aim Ibn Mas'ūd ﷺ reached the Quraish chiefs and said to them, 'You know that I am your friend and that I have nothing to do with Muḥammad ﷺ. I have a little bit of information with me. Being one who wishes well for you, it is necessary that I pass on that information to you - of course, on the condition that you will not disclose my name as its source. Here is that information: The Jews of the tribe of Banī Quraiẓah have now regretted their decision after they had concluded their pact with you. They have sent a message to Muḥammad ﷺ about it telling him that they will be willing to go along with him subject to the condition that they would hand over some chiefs of the tribes of Quraish and Ghiṭfān and that he would then put them to the sword. Once that was done, they would join hands with him and fight against all of them. Muḥammad ﷺ has accepted this proposal made by them. Now the Banū Quraiẓah were going to demand that you put some of your chiefs as ransom with them and it was upto them to figure out what they were going to do in their case.

After that, Nu'aim Ibn Mas'ūd ﷺ went to his own tribe, Ghiṭfān and to them, he passed on the same information. Concurrent to this, Abū Sufyān appointed 'Ikrimah Ibn Abī Jahl on behalf of the tribe of Quraish and Warqā' Ibn Ghiṭfān on behalf of the tribe of Ghiṭfān to the mission of going to Banū Quraiẓah and telling them that their war supplies were diminishing and their men were getting tired of having to fight continuously. So, according to the provision of their pact, they were looking forward to their help and participation. The tribe of Banū Quraiẓah, acting in the light of 'their' (latest) understanding of the pact, told them that they will not take part in the war effort with them until such time that some chiefs from both of their tribes have been placed in their custody as ransom (guarantee, hostage). 'Ikrimah and Warqā', the two emissaries carried the message back to Abū Sufyān. As a result, the chiefs of Quraish and Ghiṭfān came to believe that the information given by Sayyidnā Nu'aim Ibn Mas'ūd ﷺ was correct. So they sent a return message to Banū Quraiẓah telling them that they were not going to let

them have any of their men. Now it was up to them. If they wished they could join the war effort with them and if they did not, they were free not to. When Banū Quraiẓah saw this state of affairs, their belief in what Nu'aim Ibn Mas'ud ﷺ had said became all the more firm. It was in this manner that Allah Ta'ālā caused a rift in the ranks of the enemy through a person who came from their camp and soon after they lost their foothold on the battlefield.

Along with it there came another calamity upon them. Allah Ta'ālā caused a cold stormy wind overtake them which uprooted their tents and blew their cooking pots from their stoves. As for these, they were only outward causes generated by Allah Ta'ālā to make them desert the battlefield. More came in the form of His angels who were sent to put awe in their hearts inwardly too. These two things have been mentioned at the beginning of the verses cited above as follows: فَأَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ رِيحًا وَّجُنُودًا لَّمْ تَرَوْهَا (and We sent upon them a wind, and the forces (of angels) you did not see - 9). As a consequence, they had no choice but to run.

The event of Sayyidnā Ḥudhaifah ﷺ going into enemy lines and reporting back about conditions prevailing there

On the other side, when the Holy Prophet ﷺ heard the report of what Nu'aim Ibn Mas'ūd ﷺ had accomplished and how a rift was caused among the Confederate forces, he was strongly inclined towards the idea of someone from among the Muslims going into the enemy lines and returning with the much needed intelligence about the enemy formations and intentions. But, this severe and chilly wind storm that was sent upon the enemy, however, did affect the whole of Madīnah and Muslims too were affected by it. The chill was bitter. The time was night. The noble Ṣaḥābah were, after the heavy grind of a long day, sitting all shattered because of the confrontation, huddled together feeling the pinch of bitter cold. Addressing the gathering, the Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "Is there someone who would stand up and go into the enemy lines and bring some news about them and may Allah Ta'ālā admit him into Jannah?" Of course, this was a gathering of Ṣaḥābah who would have normally staked their lives at his call. But, the objective conditions prevailing with them were such that no one could stand up. The Holy Prophet ﷺ got busy with Ṣalāh. After remaining busy with Ṣalāh for a while, he addressed the gathering again saying, "Is there someone here who would bring me some

news from the enemy lines and receive Jannah in return for it?" This time too, silence prevailed over the entire gathering. No one rose. The Holy Prophet ﷺ got busy with Ṣalāh once again. After some time, it was the third time that he made the same appeal, "Whoever does it shall be in Jannah with me." But, everyone was so broken down from fatigue, hunger and chill and so utterly helpless that no one could still bring himself up to rise.

The narrator of the *ḥadīth*, Sayyidnā Ḥudhaifah Ibn Yamān, says, 'at that time the Holy Prophet ﷺ called me by name and said, "Ḥudhaifah, you go." My condition was no different from the others. But, once I was ordered by name, I had no option but to obey. I stood up while my whole body was shivering with bitter cold. He passed his blessed hand over my head and my face and said, "Go into the enemy lines and just bring back some news and do nothing before you return to me." Then he prayed for my safety. I picked up my bow and arrows, tied up my own clothes on my body and took my way towards them.

When I started moving ahead from here, I noticed something strange. The shivering sensation that had me in its grips while I was in the tent was all gone. Actually, I was walking as if one was inside a hot bath all the way up to enemy camp. Once there, I saw that the wind storm had uprooted their tents and upturned their cooking pots. Abū Sufyān was seated by the make-shift fire place relaxing before the heat. When I saw this (a sitting target), I trained my bow and arrow over my shoulders and was about to shoot Abū Sufyān with my arrow, I remembered the order given by the Holy Prophet ﷺ: 'Do nothing before you return back to me.' Abū Sufyān was absolutely within the striking range of my arrow, but it was in consideration of this order of the Holy Prophet ﷺ that I disengaged my arrow from the bow.

Disturbed by the condition around him, Abū Sufyān wanted to announce the plan to withdraw. But, in order to do that, it was necessary that he should talk to responsible people from among the combined armed forces. The night was dark and the place was desolate. The danger of a snooping spy nearby who may overhear what they were talking about was very much present. Therefore, Abū Sufyān did something smart. Before starting to talk, he asked the whole gathering to recognize the person sitting next to everyone so that no one who is not one of them

would be able to hear what they said.'

Sayyidnā Ḥudhaifah ﷺ says, "Now, I was scared. What if the person sitting next to me were to ask me: Who are you? If so, my cover will blow up.' It was with great presence of mind and courage that he himself took the initiative, and slapping the hand of the person sitting next to him, he himself asked: Who are you? The man said, 'Strange that you do not know me. I am so and so the son of so and so.' He was a member of the tribe of Hawāzin. Thus, Sayyidnā Ḥudhaifah was saved by Allah Ta'ālā from being arrested on the spot.

When Abū Sufyān ensured it that the gathering was that of his own people and that there was no stranger present among them, he related the disturbing conditions around them, how the tribe of Banū Quraiẓah had committed a breach of pledge and the extent to which their war supplies had shrunk. After having recounted the situation, he said: In my opinion, all of us should now leave and go back and I too am going back. Immediately thereafter, a state of panic hit the Confederate army and everyone started going back.

Sayyidnā Ḥudhaifah ﷺ says, "As I started going back from there, I felt as if I had some sort of a hot bath around me that was shielding me from the bitter chill. When I reached the home base, I found the Holy Prophet ﷺ busy with Ṣalāh. When he turned for Salām, I reported the event. Pleased with this happy news, the Holy Prophet ﷺ started laughing - to the extent that, in the darkness of the night, his blessed teeth were seen shining. After that, the Holy Prophet ﷺ made room for me close to his feet and covered my body with a part of the sheet he had wrapped around him until I went to sleep in that condition. When morning came, he himself woke me up saying: قُمْ يَانَوْمَانَ ('Up O big sleeper!')

Good News after the ambition of the disbelievers is shattered

According to a narration of Sayyidnā Sulaymān Ibn Ṣurad ﷺ appearing in the Ṣaḥīḥ of al-Bukhārī, when the Confederate forces retreated, the Holy Prophet ﷺ said:

الْاٰنَ نَغْزُوْهُمْ وَلَا يَغْزُوْنَنَا نَحْنُ نَسِيْرُ اِلَيْهِمْ (بخاری)

Now, they shall not attack us, instead, we will attack them and run over their territory - al-Bukhārī as in Maẓharī.

After having said that, the Holy Prophet ﷺ and his noble Ṣaḥābah returned to the city of Madīnah and it was only after a month that Muslims formally disarmed themselves.

A special note

This event pertaining Sayyidnā Ḥudhaifah ؓ appears in the Ṣaḥīḥ of Muslim. It is an example-setter of great class as well as a bearer of many elements of guidance and miracles of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Those who ponder over it would themselves find these out, therefore, any more details are not needed.

The Battle of Banū Quraiẓah

The Holy Prophet ﷺ had just about reached Madīnah when suddenly came Sayyidnā Jibra'īl al-Amīn ؑ in the guise of the Ṣaḥābī, Sayyidnā Diḥyah Ibn Khalīfah al-Kalbī ؓ and said, "Even though you people have disarmed yourselves but the angels have not. Allah Ta'ālā commands you to attack Banū Quraiẓah and I am going right there ahead of you."

To announce this in Madīnah, the Holy Prophet ﷺ sent a proclaimer who proclaimed this order of the Holy Prophet ﷺ before the people making sure that it reaches everyone. The order was: لَايُصَلِّيَنَّ اَحَدٌ الْعَصْرَ اِلَّا فِيْ بَنِي قُرَيْظَة (Let no man make his Ṣalāh of 'Aṣr until he reaches Banū Quraiẓah).

All Companions got ready for this second Jihād immediately and marched towards Banū Quraiẓah. On their way came the time of 'Asr. Some of them, following the outward sense of the prophetic order, did not make their Ṣalāh of 'Aṣr en route - instead, made it only after having reached the designated destination of Banū Quraiẓah. And there were others who thought that objective of the Holy Prophet ﷺ was to reach Banū Quraiẓah within the time for 'Aṣr. So, they thought, if they made their Ṣalāh en route and reached there within the time for 'Aṣr, then, it would not be contrary to the order of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Thus, they made their Ṣalāh of 'Aṣr as it became due while still en route.

In the difference of Mujtahids, no side is sinful or blameworthy

When the Holy Prophet ﷺ was informed about this difference in the practical compliance of his order on the part of the noble Ṣaḥābah, he put no blame on any of the two parties; in fact, he approved of both. From

here, the religious scholars of the Muslim community have deduced the principle that none of the different sayings of *Mujtahid 'Ulamā'* who are *Mujtahids* in the real sense of the term and have the required expertise and ability of *Ijtihād* (arriving at a Shari'ah-based religious solution of problems at the highest conceivable level) can be called 'sin' or 'blameworthy.' For both such differing sides, reward is recorded against their action as based on their respective Ijtihād.

At the time of marching out for Jihād against Banū Quraiẓah, the Holy Prophet ﷺ handed over the Muslim flag to Sayyidnā 'Ali al-Murtaḍā رضي الله عنه. Hearing about the coming of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and his noble Ṣaḥābah, the Banū Quraiẓah decided to shut themselves into their fort. The Islamic army laid a siege around it.

The Speech of Ka'b, the Chief of Banū Quraiẓah

Ka'b, the Chief of the tribe of Banū Quraiẓah who had broken the pledge given to the Holy Prophet ﷺ in favor of a compact with the Confederates, assembled his people together, told them about the delicate situation and presented three possible solutions of the problem:

"To begin with, the first option is that you all embrace Islam and follow Muḥammad ﷺ because, and I tell you on oath, you already know that he is in the right and the prophecy of his coming is there in your Torah which you recite. If you were to do this, not only that you will find safety for your life, property and children in this mortal world but also that your Hereafter too will turn out to be good and correct.

The second option is that you start by first killing your women and children with your own hands and then go on to fight and kill them with all power at your command until such time that all of you are also killed in the process.

The third option is that you make a surprise attack on Muslims on the day of Sabbath - for Muslims know that fighting and killing on the day of Sabbath is unlawful in our religion. Therefore, they would not be expecting an attack from our side on that particular day. Now, if we were to launch a sudden attack, it is possible that we may succeed."

After having heard this address of their chief, Ka'b, his people replied that they will never accept the first option of embracing Islam, because

they did not want to abandon the Torah and start believing in some other Book. As for the second option, what wrong had their women and children done that they go about killing them? As for the third option, it was by itself against the commandment of the Torah and their religion. They could not do that too.

After that, all of them reached an agreement that they would lay down their arms before the Holy Prophet ﷺ and be ready to accept whatever he decided about them. Present there were some Anṣārī Ṣaḥābah belonging to the tribe of Aws. They had an age-old pact with Banū Quraiẓah. So these Ṣaḥābah from the tribe of Aws requested the Holy Prophet ﷺ that these people may be handed over to them. The Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "Would you like me to entrust their case with one of your own chiefs?" When they agreed, the Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "He is your chief, Sa'd Ibn Mu'ādh. I entrust this matter with him for a judgement." Everyone approved of it.

Sayyidnā Sa'd Ibn Mu'ādh رضي الله عنه was fatally wounded during the battle of Khandaq (the Trench) by an arrow. The Holy Prophet ﷺ had housed him in a tent pegged within the compound of the Masjid so that he could be attended to. According to the order of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, the verdict on the prisoners from Banū Quraiẓah was left up to him. The verdict that he gave was that the warring young from them should be killed and women, children and the aged should be treated as prisoners of war which is well-recognized in Islam. This very verdict was enforced. Soon after this verdict, the wound of Sayyidnā Sa'd Ibn Muādh رضي الله عنه started bleeding suddenly. Therefrom he died. Allah Ta'ālā answered both prayers made by him - that there would be no attack from the Quraish against the Holy Prophet ﷺ in the future, and that the Banū Quraiẓah would receive the punishment for their treachery which Allah caused to come upon them precisely through him.

Some of those earmarked for killing were set free because of having embraced Islam. 'Aṭiyyah al-Quraẓī, well-known among the Ṣaḥābah, is one of them. Also among them, there was Zubayr Ibn Bāṭā. His freedom was specially requested from the Holy Prophet ﷺ by the Ṣaḥābī, Sayyidnā Thābit Ibn Qays Ibn Shammās رضي الله عنه. The reason was that Zubayr Ibn Bāṭā had done a favour to him during the days of the Jahiliyyah when, in the battle of Bu'āth, Thābit Ibn Qays had fallen a

prisoner in the hands of Zubayr Ibn Bāṭā who had simply cut the locks of his hair on the head and let him go free. He had not killed him.

Return of favour and national pride: Two unique models

After having received the order for the release of Zubayr Ibn Bāṭā, Sayyidnā Thābit Ibn Qays went to him and said, "I have done it to return your favor you had done to me during the battle of Bu'āth." Zubayr Ibn Bāṭā said, "There is no doubt that one gentleman deals with another gentleman just like that. But, please tell me what for would a man whose entire family is no more there like to stay alive?" When Sayyidnā Thābit Ibn Qays heard this, he presented himself before the Holy Prophet ﷺ and submitted that the life and honor of his family and children may also be spared. In his grace, he approved of it. When he informed Zubayr Ibn Bāṭā about it, he took another step forward saying, "O Thābit, now tell me how a man with a family would stay alive if he is left with nothing to support it?" Sayyidnā Thābit Ibn Qays returned to the Holy Prophet ﷺ once again and arranged to have whatever wealth or property he had also given back to him. Up to this point, narrated here was the case of the gentleness and gratitude of a true Muslim as demonstrated by Sayyidnā Thābit Ibn Qays.

Now, we can go to have a look at what happened on the other side. When Zubayr Ibn Bāṭā was fully satisfied after having earned his freedom and the freedom of his family and children as well as his wealth and property, he asked Sayyidnā Thābit Ibn Qays about the chiefs of the Jewish tribes: "What happened to Ibn Abī al-Ḥuqaiq whose face was like a Chinese mirror?" He said that he was killed. Then, he asked, "What became of the Banū Quraiẓah chiefs, Ka'b Ibn Quraiẓah and 'Amr Ibn Quraiẓah?" He told him that they too were killed. Then he asked about another two groups. In response, he was informed that all of them were killed.

Hearing this, Zubayr Ibn Bāṭā said to Sayyidnā Thābit Ibn Qays, "You have returned the favor done to you and you have fulfilled your responsibility as due. But, I am not going to rehabilitate myself on my property after they are no more. Include me among them." He meant that he too should be killed. Sayyidnā Thābit Ibn Qays refused to kill him. After that, it was on his insistence that some other Muslim killed him. (Qurṭubī)

This was the national pride or sense of communal shame demonstrated by a disbeliever, a *kafir* who, even after having been given everything back, did not like to continue living without his companions. Here we have two models of conduct demonstrated by a believer and a disbeliever, a *mu'min* and a *kafir*. Both belong to significant historical record. This victory against Banū Quraiẓah had taken place in the fifth year of Hijrah towards the end of the month of Dhulqa'dah and the beginning of Dhul-Ḥijjah. (Qurṭubī)

A special note of caution

That the battle of al-Aḥzāb and Banū Quraiẓah have been taken up here in a somewhat detailed manner is because of two factors. (1) First of all, the Qur'ān has itself opted to describe it in details spread over two sections. (2) Then, there is another reason for it. These events carry many instructions about different departments of life and they also spell out many clear miracles and lessons. These have been highlighted in the text of the present commentary under bold headings. Once we come to know the whole event, the translation of the meanings of the verses given above under the Arabic text, alongwith the footnotes, would become easier to understand. There are a few things that should, however, be taken note of:

Firstly, mention has been made of extreme hardships faced by Muslims in this battle. One state of the anxiety of believers has been pointed to in the words: تَظُنُّوْنَ بِاللّٰهِ الظُّنُوْنَا (and you were thinking about Allah all sorts of thoughts. - 10) These thoughts refer to scruples that emerge in one's heart beyond his control at the time of acute anxiety under which one may feel death as near with no hope of deliverance left, or at other occasions like that. Such non-voluntary apprehensions and scruples are neither contradictory of the perfection of 'Īmān (faith) nor that of one's nearness to Allah (*wilāyah*). Nevertheless, they do point out to the extent of the severity of distress and anxiety under which scruples had started creeping into the hearts of even the noble Ṣaḥābah who, otherwise, were virtual mountains of fortitude.

The second state mentioned here is that of the hypocrites for they had started saying that the promises of Allah and His Rasūl were a web of deception: اِذْ يَقُوْلُ الْمُنٰفِقُوْنَ وَالَّذِيْنَ فِىْ قُلُوْبِهِمْ مَّرَضٌ مَّا وَعَدَنَا اللّٰهُ وَرَسُوْلُهٗٓ اِلَّا غُرُوْرًا (And (remember) when the hypocrites and those having malady in their hearts

were saying, "Allah and His messenger did not promise us but deceitfully; -12). This was an externalized demonstration of their inner disbelief. Onward from here, mention has been made of two groups of hypocrites who were practically a part of the Jihād effort along with Muslims, though outwardly only. One of the two groups started running without any permission saying: وَاِذْ قَالَتْ طَّائِفَةٌ مِّنْهُمْ يَا اَهْلَ يَثْرِبَ لَا مُقَامَ لَكُمْ فَارْجِعُوْا (and when a group of them said, "O people of Yathrib (Madinah), there is no place for you to stay; so go back. - 13" And the other group requested the permission of the Holy Prophet ﷺ to go back on the basis of false excuses. Their conduct has been mentioned as: وَيَسْتَاْذِنُ فَرِيْقٌ مِّنْهُمُ النَّبِيَّ يَقُوْلُوْنَ اِنَّ بُيُوْتَنَا عَوْرَةٌ (And a group of them was seeking permission (to leave) from the prophet, saying, "In fact our homes are vulnerable," while they were not vulnerable - 13). Thus, the Qur'ān exposed the hollowness of their excuses as a pack of lies. The truth of the matter was no more than that they intended to run from the battlefront: اِنْ يُّرِيْدُوْنَ اِلَّا فِرَارًا (They wanted nothing but to escape - 13). Taken up in the next several verses is their mischief-making and enmity with Muslims following which their sad end has been pointed out.

After that, the text mentions sincere believers and praises their firmness and fortitude. In the same connection, there comes a strong assertion of the need to obey and follow the Holy Prophet ﷺ almost in the form of a legal rule of conduct: لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِيْ رَسُوْلِ اللّٰهِ اُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ (There is indeed a good model for you in the Messenger of Allah - 21). From here it stands proved that all sayings and doings of the Holy Prophet ﷺ have to be followed. But, the Shari'ah authorities have explained the rule about the different degrees of following required from a Muslim. The rule is that any act or omission of the Holy Prophet ﷺ proved to have been done as an obligation would have to be obeyed and followed as *wājib* (obligatory, necessary). And any act or omission on his part that is proved to have been done as a preferable conduct (*istiḥbāb*) and not as an obligatory one, should be followed by us too as a commendable (mustaḥab) conduct and not as a necessary obligation This, in other words, means that its contravention will not be declared to be a sin. (For a detailed discussion, see al-Jaṣṣāṣ in Aḥkām ul-Qur'ān)

The last three (25-27) of the cited verses refer to the event relating to Banū Quraiāẓah. In verse 26: وَاَنْزَلَ الَّذِيْنَ ظَاهَرُوْهُمْ مِّنْ اَهْلِ الْكِتٰبِ مِنْ صَيَاصِيْهِمْ it was said that Allah Ta'ālā had, by putting the awe of the Holy Prophet ﷺ

and his Muslim followers into the hearts of the people of the Book who had helped the Confederate forces, made them come down from their strong fortresses and had thus made Muslims the inheritors of their properties, homes and areas of concentration.

In the last verse (27), good news of future victories has been given. Gone is the time when disbelievers attacked. Now the cycle of Muslim victories will begin and they will come to be on lands their feet have not touched yet. And this prophecy unfolded itself during the tenure of the noble Ṣaḥābah and everyone witnessed the spectacle of great empires ruled by Cyrus and Caesar come under them. And Allah does what He wills.

Verses 28 - 34

يٰٓاَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ قُلْ لِّاَزْوَاجِكَ اِنْ كُنْتُنَّ تُرِدْنَ الْحَيٰوةَ الدُّنْيَا وَزِيْنَتَهَا
فَتَعَالَيْنَ اُمَتِّعْكُنَّ وَاُسَرِّحْكُنَّ سَرَاحًا جَمِيْلًا ﴿٢٨﴾ وَاِنْ كُنْتُنَّ تُرِدْنَ
اللّٰهَ وَرَسُوْلَهٗ وَالدَّارَ الْاٰخِرَةَ فَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ اَعَدَّ لِلْمُحْسِنٰتِ مِنْكُنَّ اَجْرًا
عَظِيْمًا ﴿٢٩﴾ يٰنِسَآءَ النَّبِيِّ مَنْ يَّاْتِ مِنْكُنَّ بِفَاحِشَةٍ مُّبَيِّنَةٍ يُّضٰعَفْ
لَهَا الْعَذَابُ ضِعْفَيْنِ ؕ وَكَانَ ذٰلِكَ عَلَى اللّٰهِ يَسِيْرًا ﴿٣٠﴾ وَمَنْ
يَّقْنُتْ مِنْكُنَّ لِلّٰهِ وَرَسُوْلِهٖ وَتَعْمَلْ صَالِحًا نُّؤْتِهَآ اَجْرَهَا مَرَّتَيْنِ ۙ
وَاَعْتَدْنَا لَهَا رِزْقًا كَرِيْمًا ﴿٣١﴾ يٰنِسَآءَ النَّبِيِّ لَسْتُنَّ كَاَحَدٍ مِّنَ
النِّسَآءِ اِنِ اتَّقَيْتُنَّ فَلَا تَخْضَعْنَ بِالْقَوْلِ فَيَطْمَعَ الَّذِيْ فِيْ قَلْبِهٖ مَرَضٌ
وَّقُلْنَ قَوْلًا مَّعْرُوْفًا ﴿٣٢﴾ وَقَرْنَ فِيْ بُيُوْتِكُنَّ وَلَا تَبَرَّجْنَ تَبَرُّجَ
الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ الْاُوْلٰى وَاَقِمْنَ الصَّلٰوةَ وَ اٰتِيْنَ الزَّكٰوةَ وَاَطِعْنَ اللّٰهَ
وَرَسُوْلَهٗ ؕ اِنَّمَا يُرِيْدُ اللّٰهُ لِيُذْهِبَ عَنْكُمُ الرِّجْسَ اَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ
وَيُطَهِّرَكُمْ تَطْهِيْرًا ﴿٣٣﴾ وَاذْكُرْنَ مَا يُتْلٰى فِيْ بُيُوْتِكُنَّ مِنْ اٰيٰتِ اللّٰهِ
وَ الْحِكْمَةِ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ كَانَ لَطِيْفًا خَبِيْرًا ﴿٣٤﴾

O prophet, say to your wives, "If you intend (to have the pleasure of) worldly life and its charm, then come on, and I shall give you some stuff, and release you in a handsome fashion. [28] **and if you intend (to gain the pleasure of) Allah and His messenger and (the betterment of) the Hereafter, then, Allah has prepared a great reward for those of you who do good".** [29] **O wives of the Prophet, whoever from among you will commit a clearly shameful act, the punishment will be doubled for her. And it is easy for Allah to do so.** [30] **And whoever of you stays obedient to Allah and His messenger, and acts righteously, We shall give her twice her reward, and We have prepared for her a prestigious provision.** [31] **O wives of the prophet, you are not like any other women, if you observe *taqwā*. So, do not be too soft in your speech, lest someone having disease in his heart should develop fancies (about you); and do speak with appropriate words.** [32] **And remain in your homes, and do not display (your) beauty as it used to be displayed in the days of earlier ignorance. And establish *ṣalāh*, and pay *zakāh*, and obey Allah and His messenger. Allah only intends to keep (all sorts of) filth away from you, O members of the family (of the prophet), and to make you pure through a perfect purification.** [33] **And be mindful of Allah's verses and the wisdom that is recited in your homes. Surely, Allah is All-Kind, All- Aware.** [34]

Commentary

Out of the objectives of this Sūrah, the most important is the stress placed on avoiding everything that may cause pain to the Holy Prophet ﷺ. In addition to that, there is a reiteration of instructions to obey him and seek his pleasure. Mentioned in connection with the event of the battle of al-Aḥzāb appearing immediately earlier was the pain caused to the Holy Prophet ﷺ at the hands of the disbelievers and hypocrites. Along with it, also mentioned there was their ultimate disgrace and the victory and success that came to the Holy Prophet ﷺ on every occasion. Also praised there were sincere believers who sacrificed what they had at the instance of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and it was said that they would have high ranks in the Hereafter.

In the verses cited above, the blessed wives of the Holy Prophet ﷺ have been particularly taught to be careful that no word or deed that

issues forth from them goes on to cause pain to him. And this is possible only when they devote themselves and become totally obedient to Allah and His Messenger. Some injunctions in this connection have been given by addressing the blessed wives directly.

As for giving the choice of the taking of divorce to the blessed wives in the initial verses, it is limited to one or some incidents that came from the side of the blessed wives. These were contrary to the intent of the Holy Prophet ﷺ which caused pain to him.

One of these incidents is reported from Sayyidnā Jābir رضي الله عنه and appears in the Ṣaḥīḥ of Muslim and elsewhere as well. It is said there that the blessed wives got together and asked the Holy Prophet ﷺ that their sustenance allowance should be increased. Abū Ḥayyān explains it in Tafsīr al-Baḥr ul-Muḥīṭ by saying that the victories of Banū Naḍīr and Banū Quraiẓah after the battle of al-Aḥzāb coupled with the distribution of spoils had generated a certain improved economic well-being among common Muslims. At that time, the blessed wives thought the Holy Prophet ﷺ would have also set aside a share for himself in the spoils. Therefore, they appealed to him jointly saying, "*Yā Rasulallah*, these wives of Cyrus and Caesar are laden with all sorts of valuable ornaments and dresses and have maids appointed to serve them while you see how hungry and ill-clad we are. Therefore, some liberal treatment in our case seems to be in order now."

When the Holy Prophet ﷺ heard this demand from the blessed wives that they should be treated at par with the life styles of kings and the worldly-wise rich, he was grieved about how much they had missed to appreciate the worth and value of living in the home of a prophet of Allah. On their part, the blessed wives never thought that their submission would cause pain to him. It was simply because of the well-being of common Muslims around them that they had also thought of the same for themselves. Abū Ḥayyān says that the description of this incident after the battle of al-Aḥzāb also supports the likelihood that this very demand of the wives became the cause of the choice of divorce given to them. According to some Ḥadīth narratives, following the event of having a honey drink while at the home of Sayyidah Zainab ﷺ - which will appear in detail later under the commentary on Sūrah At-Taḥrīm, 66:1-5, in Mā'ariful-Qur'ān, Volume VIII - a situation created by the mutual

sense of importance among the blessed wives became the cause of this choice of divorce. If both of these happened close in time to each other, then, it is also not remote to believe that they both could be the cause. But, the words of the Verse of Choice[(1)] are more supportive of the understanding that some financial demand had become its cause - for it was said in this verse: اِنْ كُنْتُنَّ تُرِدْنَ الْحَيٰوةَ الدُّنْيَا وَزِيْنَتَهَا (If you intend (to have the pleasure of) worldly life and its charm - 28).

This verse gave all blessed wives of the Holy Prophet ﷺ the choice to either accept to continue living with him as their husband in the condition he is in (that is, in his straightened economic condition), or become free from him through divorce. If they were to take the first option, they will deserve greater reward and higher ranks in the Hereafter as compared to other women. And if they were to take the second option, that is, taking a divorce, they will not have to face any displeasure as customary with worldly people. In fact, they would be given a send-off with honor, and parting gifts in accordance with Sunnah.

Tirmidhī reports from Umm al-Mu'minīn Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضى الله عنها, "When this verse of choice was revealed, the Holy Prophet ﷺ disclosed it to me before any other wife. Before reciting the verse, he said: I am going to tell you something. But, you do not have to make haste in giving your response. You should rather consult your parents and then respond. Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضى الله عنها says, "This was his special favour to me that he prohibited me from expressing my opinion without having consulted my parents first, because he was certain that my parents would never advise me to opt for separation from the Holy Prophet ﷺ. When I heard this verse, I immediately submitted before him, "Do I have to go and consult my parents in this matter? As for me, I choose Allah and His Messenger and the Home of the Hereafter." Then, after me, this command of the Qur'ān was announced to all blessed wives. All of them said what I had said first (that is, none of them elected to have worldly affluence against the honor of being the wives of the Holy Prophet ﷺ." (Tirmidhī said: This Ḥadīth is Ḥasan Ṣaḥīḥ).

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(1). The 'Verse of Choice' is the title of the verse 29 cited above where the blessed wives of the Holy Prophet ﷺ are given a choice either to seek divorce from him or to remain with him, seeking the pleasure of Allah and His Messenger.

Special Note

Choice of Divorce can be given to a woman in two different forms: (1) That the power of divorce is entrusted with the woman, that is, if she wishes, she can divorce her self and become free. (2) That the power of giving divorce, though, remains in the hands of the husband, yet the husband gives her a promise that when she will wish, he will divorce her. (in the first case, as soon as the wife opts for divorce, she becomes divorced automatically without any act on the part of the husband. But in the latter case, divorce is not effected merely by the woman opting for it unless the husband divorces her.

In the case of the cited verse (28), some commentators are of the view that the choice given to the wives of the Holy Prophet ﷺ was of the first form, while others have maintained that it was of the second form. The esteemed author of Bayān ul-Qur'ān has commented that the verse has both probabilities. Until one of the two stands determined on the authority of some definitive text, there is no need to determine any form on one's own.'

Ruling

This verse (28) tells us when there is no congruity between the temperaments of the married couple, the desirable approach is to give the wife the option to live with the husband while being content with whatever state he is in, otherwise, she should be allowed to leave honorably according to Sunnah with divorce and gift of pairs of apparel.

In this case, what can be proved from the cited verse (28) is its desirability only. There is no proof to support its obligation. Some leading Muslim jurists have argued in favour of the obligatory nature of this verse and, on the same basis, they have given the wife of a penniless man, who is incapable of providing living expenses for her, the right to secure a divorce from the court. Full details of this issue have been given in Aḥkām ul-Qur'ān, Part V, under this very verse.[1]

The particular position of the blessed wives and the rationale of hard restrictions placed on them

يٰنِسَآءَ النَّبِيِّ مَنْ يَّاْتِ مِنْكُنَّ بِفَاحِشَةٍ مُّبَيِّنَةٍ يُّضٰعَفْ لَهَا الْعَذَابُ ضِعْفَيْنِ ۚ وَكَانَ

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(1). This work in Arabic is available from Maktaba-e-Darul-'Uloom, the publishers of the present Tafsīr]

ذٰلِكَ عَلَى اللّٰهِ يَسِيرًا ﴿٣٠﴾ وَمَنْ يَّقْنُتْ مِنْكُنَّ لِلّٰهِ وَرَسُوْلِهٖ وَتَعْمَلْ صَالِحًا نُّؤْتِهَآ
اَجْرَهَا مَرَّتَيْنِ ﴿٣١﴾

O wives of the Prophet, whoever from among you will commit a clearly shameful act, the punishment will be doubled for her. And it is easy for Allah to do so. [30] And whoever of you stays obedient to Allah and His messenger, and acts righteously, We shall give her twice her reward, and We have prepared for her a prestigious provision. [31]

From the above verses we notice that the Qur'ān mentions therein a particular position of the blessed wives: If they were to commit some sin, they will have to face a punishment which will be twice that of other women. In other words, one sin committed by them will be made to stand for two. Similarly, if they did good deeds, the reward given to them will also be twice that of other women - that is, one good deed done by them will stand for two.

In a way, this verse is a recompense of what the blessed wives did at the time of the revelation of the Verse of Choice whereupon they chose to remain wedded to the Holy Prophet ﷺ and sacrificed whatever material benefits there were in doing otherwise. In return for this, Allah Ta'ālā gave one good deed done by them the status of two. As for the two-fold punishment in the event of some sin from them, that too came to be because of their special superiority and distinctive gentleness and because it stands proved both rationally and textually that Divine punishment for heedlessness and rebellion does increase in proportion to the honor and regard in which one is held.

Certainly great are the blessings of Allah Ta'ālā upon the blessed wives. Allah Ta'ālā chose them to be the wives of His *Rasūl*. The Divine Revelation kept descending in their homes. Under such arrangements, is it not that the least error or shortcoming on their part would be nothing but big? And if, pain is caused to the Holy Prophet ﷺ at the hands of others, then, it would be far more severe in effect that some such occasion of pain or discomfort issues forth from their side. The very words of the Qur'ān: وَاذْكُرْنَ مَا يُتْلٰى فِىْ بُيُوْتِكُنَّ (And be mindful of Allah's verses and the wisdom that is recited in your homes) appearing in verse 34 point out to this reason.

Special Note

Looked at in terms of the Muslim community at large, this distinction of the blessed wives - that they receive a two-fold reward of their deed - does not make it necessary that no individual or group is not to be blessed with a two-fold reward for some distinction of theirs. For example, there is the case of those from among the people of the Book who embraced Islam. About them, it was said in the Qur'ān: أُولَٰئِكَ يُؤْتَوْنَ أَجْرَهُم مَّرَّتَيْنِ (Such people will be given their reward twice - al-Qaṣaṣ, 28:54).

In the blessed letter the Holy Prophet ﷺ wrote to the Byzantine Emperor, it was because of this Qur'ānic statement that he particularly wrote: يُؤْتِكَ اللّٰهُ أَجْرَكَ مَرَّتَيْنِ (you will be given your reward twice by Allah). As for the clarification of 'giving a reward twice' to the people of the Book who embrace Islam, it is already present in the Qur'ān. Then, there is yet another Ḥadīth where a similar two-fold reward has been mentioned for three persons. Details about it appear in the commentary on Sūrah al-Qaṣaṣ under the verse: يُؤْتَوْنَ أَجْرَهُم مَّرَّتَيْنِ (will be given their reward twice - 28:54) in Volume VI of Tafsīr Mā'ariful-Qur'ān.

The reward for the good deed of an 'Ālim exceeds that of others, and the punishment of his sin too

In Aḥkām ul-Qur'ān, Imām Abū Bakr al-Jaṣṣāṣ has said: The reason for which Allah Ta'ālā has declared the reward of the good deed of the blessed wives to be two-fold and the punishment of their disobedience also to be two-fold - i.e. their being the special recipients of the prophetic knowledge and Divine revelation--- is also present there in the case of Muslim religious scholars (the '*ulamā*' of *dīn*). Therefore, an 'Ālim (Muslim religious scholar) whose practice is in accord with his '*ilm* (knowledge) will find the reward of that deed of his to be more than others. And if he were to commit some sin, the punishment too will be more than others.

The word: فَاحِشَة (*fāḥishah*) appearing in: بِفَاحِشَةٍ مُّبَيِّنَةٍ - 30) is used in the Arabic language for acts of shame as well as for disobedience and sin in an absolute sense. This word has been used in the Qur'ān at many places. In this verse, this word cannot be taken to mean acts of shame because Allah Ta'ālā has kept the wives of all His prophets immune from this serious fault. None of the wives of the blessed prophets has ever committed any act of this nature. The wives of Sayyidnā Lūṭ and

Sayyidnā Nūḥ عليهما السلام deviated from the faith preached by them, rebelled, and were punished for it. But, none of them was ever charged of committing an act of shame. As for the blessed wives of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, there was absolutely no probability that any such act of immodesty will ever issue forth from them. Therefore, the word: *fāḥishah* in this verse means common sins or the causing of pain and discomfort to the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Then the word: مُبَيِّنَه (*mubayyinah*: open, clear, manifest) used here along with فَاحِشَة is an evidence in support, because acts of shamelessness are not '*mubayyinah*'(clear, manifest) anywhere. That takes place secretly. So, the expression: فَاحِشَةٍ مُّبَيِّنَةٍ (clearly shameful act) means common sins, or the causing of pain to the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Out of the Tafsīr authorities, Muqātil Ibn Sulaimān has declared that the sense of 'shameful act' in this verse is either disobeying the Holy Prophet ﷺ or demanding something from him the fulfillment of which is hard on him. (Reported by al-Baihaqī in As-Sunan)

It will be noticed that the two-fold punishment has been identified by the Qur'ān only with *'clearly shameful act'*. But, for the two-fold reward, it has imposed several restrictions, as in: وَمَنْ يَّقْنُتْ مِنكُنَّ لِلّٰهِ وَرَسُوْلِهٖ وَتَعْمَلْ صَالِحًا نُّؤْتِهَا اَجْرَهَا مَرَّتَيْنِ (And whoever of you stays obedient to Allah and His messenger, and acts righteously, We shall give her twice her reward-- 31). Here, *qunūt*, that is, staying obedience to Allah and His Messenger is a condition. Then, acting righteously is yet another condition. The reason is that reward comes only when obedience is perfect while, for punishment, even a single sin is enough.

Special Instructions given to the Blessed Wives

Before we describe these instructions in details as they appear from the next verse: يٰنِسَآءَ النَّبِيِّ لَسْتُنَّ كَاَحَدٍ مِّنَ النِّسَآءِ اِنِ اتَّقَيْتُنَّ فَلَا تَخْضَعْنَ بِالْقَوْلِ (O wives of the prophet, you are not like any other women, if you observe *taqwā*. So, do not be too soft in your speech ... 32), it will be useful to recollect that, in the previous verses, the blessed wives have been restrained from placing demands before the Holy Prophet ﷺ, the fulfillment of which will be hard on him, or those which may be inappropriate in view of his high prophetic station. And once they have chosen to live in that arrangement, their status was raised higher than other women to the extent that one deed done by them was made to stand for two. Now, in and onwards from verse 32, they have been given some instructions in order to correct and

groom their conduct as appropriate for wives living with the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Though, all these instructions are not restricted to the blessed wives in particular, in fact, virtually all Muslim women are obligated to observe these. But, at this place, the blessed wives have been addressed specially to bring it to their attention that they should make it a point to observe these rules of conduct that apply to all Muslim women as incumbent and obligatory - more avidly as compared to others. It is this kind of particularity that is meant by the expression: لَسْتُنَّ كَأَحَدٍ مِّنَ النِّسَاءِ (you are not like any other women - 32).

Are the blessed wives superior to all women of the world?

The arrangement of these words in the verse seems to obviously suggest that the blessed wives رضی اللہ عنہن are superior to the women of the whole world. But, in the verse of the Qur'ān about Sayyidah Maryam علیها السلام, it has been said: إِنَّ اللّٰهَ اصْطَفٰكِ وَطَهَّرَكِ وَاصْطَفٰكِ عَلٰى نِسَآءِ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ (Allah has chosen you and purified you and chosen you over the women of all the worlds - 'Āl-'Imrān, 3:42). This proves the superiority of Sayyidah Maryam over the women of all the worlds. Then, there is the Ḥadīth of Sayyidnā Anas ؓ in Tirmidhī where the Holy Prophet ﷺ has been reported to have said, 'Sufficient for you (to hold in esteem) out of all women are: Maryam daughter of 'Imrān, Khadījah daughter of Khuwailid (*Ummul- Mu'minīn*), Fāṭimah daughter of Muḥammad ﷺ and 'Āsiyah wife of the Pharaoh.' In this Ḥadīth, three other women along with Sayyidah Maryam have been identified as superior to women of all the worlds.

Therefore, the superiority or precedence of the blessed wives described in this verse occurs here in its special status, that is, the status of their being the wives and women of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, the status in which they are doubtlessly superior to women of all the worlds. However, it does not prove the kind of universally absolute superiority which may be counter to other *nusus* (textual authority). (Maẓharī)

Soon after the opening sentence of verse 32: لَسْتُنَّ كَأَحَدٍ مِّنَ النِّسَاءِ (you are not like any other woman), there appears the condition of: إِنِ اتَّقَيْتُنَّ (if you observe Taqwā). This condition refers to the superiority they have been blessed with by Allah Ta'ālā because of their being women and wives of the Prophet ﷺ. The purpose thereby is to caution them against relying solely on this relationship of theirs with the Prophet ﷺ. that they are,

after all, the wives of the Messenger of Allah. Instead of that, this superiority is based on the condition that they observe Taqwā and obey Divine injunctions. (Qurṭubī and Maẓharī)

After that, some instructions have been given to the blessed wives رضی اللہ عنهن :

The First Instruction

It relates to restrictions on the modality of voice and speech as part of the rules of *ḥijāb* or *pardah* applicable to women and begins with the words: فَلَا تَخْضَعْنَ بِالْقَوْلِ (so do not be too soft in your speech- 32). It means, even if there be the need to talk to someone who is not a *maḥram* from behind a screen (or something else obstructing the view), even then, while speaking, effort should be made to avoid the delicacy and grace in diction naturally present in the voice of women. The delicacy and grace mentioned here refer to a certain level of softness which might make some inclination rise in the heart of the addressee as stated immediately after: فَيَطْمَعَ الَّذِي فِي قَلْبِهِ مَرَضٌ وَّقُلْنَ قَوْلاً مَعْرُوفًا (lest someone having disease in his heart should develop fancies (about you); and do speak with appropriate words. - 32) The sense is that one should not talk softly in a manner that would cause temptation and tilt in a person who already has some disease in his heart. Disease means hypocrisy, or its offshoots. That a real hypocrite will be so tempted is all too obvious. But, a person who, despite being a sincere believer, inclines towards something unlawful may not be a hypocrite but weak in faith he certainly is. And this weakness in faith which makes one tilt towards the unlawful is really nothing but an offshoot of hypocrisy. With faith being pure and having not the least element of hypocrisy in it, no one can ever tilt towards what is *ḥarām*, unlawful. (Maẓharī)

In essence, the aim of the first instruction is to empower women to achieve the high station of self-protection from non-Maḥram men through personal avoidance and legal *ḥijāb* so that they do not go even near a non-Maḥram weak in faith lest some temptation or tilt creeps into his heart. A detailed discussion of the *ḥijāb* of women will appear within this Sūrah under the verses that follow. Being given at this point is simply an explanation of what has appeared here as part of the special instructions for the blessed wives. So, once the noble mothers of the believers had heard the instruction about speech or address, some of them were so alerted that they, while talking to a non-Maḥram male after the

revelation of this verse, used to put their hand over their mouth so that their voice would change. Therefore, it appears in a Ḥadīth of Sayyidnā 'Amr Ibn al-'Ās: إِنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ نَهٰى اَنْ يُكَلِّمَ النِّسَآءُ اِلَّا بِاِذْنِ اَزْوَاجِهِنَّ (The Holy Prophet ﷺ had prohibited that women talk without the permission of their spouses) (Reported by aṭ-Ṭabarānī with 'good' chain of authority, Maẓharī)

Ruling

At least this much stands proved from this verse, and from the Ḥadīth quoted above, that the voice of a woman is not included under *satr*, that is, under what must be concealed. But, a precautionary restriction has been placed here too. Then, consideration has also been given in religious injunctions and acts of worship that women do not talk at a high pitch that could be heard by men. If the Imām makes a mistake, those following him in the congregation are duty-bound to interrupt and correct him verbally. But, women have been taught that, instead of correcting the Imām verbally, they should simply clap by striking one hand over the back of the other so that the Imām is alerted. They have to say nothing verbally.

The Second Instruction

This concerns the observance of full *ḥijāb* (*purdah* or veil). It was said: وَقَرْنَ فِيْ بُيُوْتِكُنَّ وَلَا تَبَرَّجْنَ تَبَرُّجَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ الْأُوْلٰى (And remain in your homes, and do not display (your) beauty as it used to be displayed in the days of earlier ignorance - 33). Here, the expression: اَلْجَاهِلِيَّةِ الْأُوْلٰى (the days of earlier ignorance) means the Jahiliyyah which prevailed in the world before the advent of Islam. Embedded in this expression is the hint that later than it there is to come yet another Jahiliyyah, a period of another ignorance in which a similar display of immodesty and disregard for proper covering of bodies would become rampant. That, probably, is the Jahiliyyah of modern times, something visible everywhere.

In this verse, the essential injunction about *ḥijāb* is that women stay at home (that is, do not go out without the need as admissible in the Sharī'ah). Along with it, it was also said that they should not go out moving around in public without *ḥijāb*, as it used to be the wont of women in the earlier period of Jāhiliyyah. The word: تَبَرُّج (*tabarruj*) essentially means manifestation or display and, at this place, it means the display of personal embellishment before non-Maḥram men - as it appears

in another verse: غَيْرَ مُتَبَرِّجٰتٍ بِزِيْنَةٍ (not displaying embellishment - An-Nūr, 24:60).

As said earlier, a full discussion of the *ḥijāb* or *pardah* of women and the injunctions related with it will follow within this Sūrah. Our present comments shall remain restricted to the explanation of the cited verse. The verse tells us two things about *ḥijāb*:

(1) For women, the real thing desirable with Allah is that they should not go out of their homes. Their creation is an answer to whatever needs to be done at home. Let them stay involved in it. As for the real *ḥijāb* desirable in the Sharī'ah, it is a *ḥijāb* that stands achieved by their staying at home, that is, the home becomes their veil or cover (حِجَابُ بِالْبُيُوْت: *al-ḥijāb-bil-buyut*).

(2) The other thing it tells us is: If a woman has to go out of the home to take care of some need, let her not go out with any display of embellishment. Instead, she should wear what covers her whole body, a *burqa'*, or *jilbāb* (women's gown, garment or cloak) - as in the verse of this very Sūrah Al-Aḥzāb: يُدْنِيْنَ عَلَيْهِنَّ مِنْ جَلَابِيْبِهِنَّ (bring down over themselves part of their outer garments - 33:59), the details about which shall appear later, *insha'Allah Ta'ālā*.

Occasions of need have been exempted from the obligation of 'staying in homes.'

In the opening sentence of verse 33: قَرْنَ فِيْ بُيُوْتِكُنَّ (And remain in your homes), staying in homes was made obligatory (*wājib*) which apparently purports that it should be absolutely prohibited and *ḥarām* for a woman to go out of her home, but verse has, at the first place, already indicated through the use of the words: وَلَا تَبَرَّجْنَ (And do not display your beauty) within this verse that going out as needed is not prohibited in an absolute sense. Instead, what is prohibited is going out in a manner which displays embellishment. Then, there is the injunction of: يُدْنِيْنَ عَلَيْهِنَّ مِنْ جَلَابِيْبِهِنَّ (bring down over themselves part of their outer garments - 33:59) to appear later in Sūrah Al-Aḥzāb. This injunction is itself telling us that to a certain degree women do have the permission to go out of the home, of course on condition that they go out in *ḥijāb* wearing an outer garment like *burqa'* etc.

In addition to that, the Holy Prophet ﷺ has himself clarified that

occasions of need are exempt from this injunction, as in a Ḥadīth where, while addressing the blessed wives, he is reported to have said: قَدْ اُذِنَ لَكُنَّ اَنْ تَخْرُجْنَ لِحَاجَتِكُنَّ (You are permitted to go out for your needs - reported by Muslim). Then, the conduct of the Holy Prophet ﷺ after the revelation of the verse of *ḥijāb* proves that women have the permission to go out of homes on occasions of need, as the going of the blessed wives with the Holy Prophet ﷺ for *Ḥajj* and *'Umrah* stands confirmed on the authority of sound and authentic Aḥādīth. Similarly, their going with him in many battles stands proved. Then, there are many narrations of Ḥadīth which also prove that the blessed wives رضى الله عنهن used to go out of their homes to visit their parents, did their duty by calling on the sick among relatives and offering condolence on the death of someone among them. And during the blessed time of the Prophet ﷺ, they also had the permission to go to the *Masājid*.

And not only that it happened in the company of the Holy Prophet ﷺ or in his time alone, but even after his passing away, it is a confirmed fact that the all his blessed wives went for *Ḥajj* and *'Umrah* - with the exception of Sayyidah Saudah رضى الله عنها and Sayyidah Zainab bint Jaḥsh رضى الله عنها etc. No reproach or disapproval (*nakāir)* thereupon has been reported from any of the noble Ṣaḥabah. In fact, Sayyidnā 'Umar ﷺ sent the blessed wives of the Messenger of Allah for Ḥajj under arrangements specially made for them - he sent Sayyidnā 'Uthmān al-Ghanī ﷺ and Sayyidnā 'Abd ur-Raḥmān Ibn al-'Awf ﷺ with them to supervise and manage their pilgrimage. And as for the incidence of Ummul-Mu'minīn Sayyidah Saudah and Sayyidah Zainab bint Jaḥsh رضى الله عنهما not going for Ḥajj and 'Umrah after the passing away of the noble Prophet ﷺ, it was not on the basis of this verse, instead, it was on the basis of a Ḥadīth. That is, when on the occasion of the Last Ḥajj (*Hajjatul-Wadaā*), the Holy Prophet ﷺ helped his blessed wives perform their Ḥajj with him personally, the remark that he made on return was: هٰذِهٖ ثُمَّ لُزُوْمُ الْحُصُر (This is it. After that, should stick to the mats at home). The first word: هٰذِهٖ (*ḥādhihī*: translated here as 'this is it') refers to this very Ḥajj and حُصُر (*ḥuṣur*) is the plural form of حَصِير (*ḥaṣīr*) which means a mat (of straw, a modest version of other floor spreads such as rug, carpet, *daree* etc.). In essence, the Ḥadīth is saying: Your going out for this alone is done. After that, you stick to the mats of your homes necessarily

without having to part therefrom. Sayyidah Saudah bint Zam'ah رضى الله عنها and Sayyidah Zainab bint Jaḥsh رضى الله عنها took this Ḥadīth to mean: 'Your going out was permissible for this very Last Ḥajj. Beyond that, it is not.' The other blessed wives - including a jurist of the class of Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضى الله عنها - unanimously interpreted these words of the Holy Prophet ﷺ to mean that 'your going out of your homes is permissible for this kind of journey which aims at performing a recognized act of worship, otherwise you should stay at home' In gist, from the sense of the verse: وَقَرْنَ فِىْ بُيُوْتِكُنَّ (And remain in your homes - 33) - as supported by the indicators of the Qur'ān, the practice of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and the consensus of the noble Ṣaḥābah - occasions of need are exempted which include religious obligations of Ḥajj and 'Umrah, taking care of the natural duties towards parents, visiting Maḥram relatives in health and sickness and attending to other requirements of this nature. Similarly, if a woman has no arrangement for her living expenses, then, it is also permissible for her to go out in *ḥijāb* in order to earn an honorable living. However, going out on occasions of need is subject to the condition that one does not go out to display personal embellishment. Instead, one should go out properly covered with *burqa'* or *jilbāb* (full mantle or *chadar*).

The offensive lapses of the Rawāfiḍ about the journey of Ummul-Mu'minin Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضى الله عنها to Baṣrah and the event of the battle of Jamal:

It has been made amply clear in the previous paragraph that the sense of the imperative of وَقَرْنَ فِىْ بُيُوْتِكُنَّ 'remain in your homes' (33) as proved from the very indicators, rather, expressions of the Qur'ān, as well as from the practice of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and after him from the consensus of the noble Ṣaḥābah, it is confirmed that occasions of need are exempt from it - which includes going for religious needs of Ḥajj and 'Umrah etc. Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah along with Sayyidah Umm Salamah and Sayyidah Ṣafiyyah, may Allah be pleased with all of them, had gone for Ḥajj. There they heard about the martyrdom of Sayyidnā 'Uthmān رضى الله عنه and about the incidents of rebellion against him. They were intensely grieved. The apprehension of an ill-omened disorder counter to unity among Muslims was weighing heavy on their minds. Under these circumstances, Sayyidnā Ṭalḥah, Zubair, Nu'mān Ibn Bashīr, Ka'b Ibn

'Ujrah and some other noble Ṣaḥabah escaped from Madīnah and reached Makkah al-Mu'azzamah because the killers of Sayyidnā 'Uthmān ﷺ wanted to kill them too. These people were not with the rebels. In fact, they had tried to dissuade them from acting in that manner. So, as they were after them as well, these people saved their lives by escaping to Makkah al-Mu'azzamah. Once there, they presented themselves before Ummul-Mu'minīn Sayyidah 'Āishah رضی اللہ عنہا and sought her good counsel. She advised them not to go to Madīnah until such time the rebels are gathered around Sayyidnā 'Alī ﷺ and he is exercising restraint against taking Qiṣāṣ (retaliation) from them, lest the situation is aggravated further. In this situation, they should go to live for a few days at a place where they find themselves safe and the Amīr al-Mu'minīn succeeds in controlling the law and order situation in Madīnah. As for making whatever efforts they can, the best they can do is to try that these people converged around the Amīr al-Mu'minīn get scattered and he is enabled to exercise his authority to exact Qiṣāṣ (retaliation) or revenge from them.

To this, they agreed and thought of leaving for Baṣrah because at that time Muslim forces were converged there. Once their plan to go was firm, they also requested Ummul-Mu'minīn Sayyidah 'Āishah رضی اللہ عنہا to stay at Baṣrah along with them until such time that the government resumes its normal function.

And the fact of the power and dominance of the killers of Sayyidnā 'Uthmān, as well as of the leaders of disorder, and the lack of Sayyidnā 'Alī's power to enforce the Islamic legal punishment against them is something clearly proven from the report of Nahjul-Balāghah itself.(1) It should be borne in mind that Nahjul-Balāghah is regarded to be authentic by Shiites. It appears in Nahjul-Baāghah: 'To the noble Amīr (Amīr al-Mu'minīn Sayyidnā 'Alī ﷺ), some of his companions and colleagues themselves said: If you punish the people who attacked 'Uthmān ﷺ, it will be better. Thereupon, the noble Amīr said: My brother, I am not unaware of this thing you are talking about. But, how can this be done when these very people are there all over Madīnah - and your slaves and the Bedouins of the adjoining areas have also joined

(1) Nahjul-Balāghah is a compilation of the lectures of Sayyidnā 'Alī ﷺ held by the Shiites as authentic.

them. If, under these circumstances, I were to issue the orders for their punishment, how would these be implemented?

On one side, Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضی اللہ عنہا realized the helplessness of Sayyidnā 'Alī ﷺ in this matter while, on the other, she also knew that the hearts of Muslims were wounded in the face of the *shahadah* of Sayyidnā 'Uthmān ﷺ. Moreover, the delay in taking the due revenge from his killers on the part of Sayyidnā 'Alī ﷺ was being watched as his helplessness while the killers of Sayyidnā 'Uthmān also used to participate in the meetings of the Amīr al-Mu'minīn. People who were not aware of his helplessness had found their reason for complaint against him as well. It was possible that this kind of complaint may trigger some other trial. Therefore, it was to exhort people to observe patience, to strengthen the hands of Amīr al-Mu'minīn for the purpose of stabilizing the rule of law in the state, to remove mutual complaints and to achieve the objective of making things work better among people that Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضی اللہ عنہا decided to embark on the journey to Baṣrah. In this journey, her *Maḥram* nephew, Sayyidnā 'Abdullah Ibn Zubair ﷺ and others were with her. She had herself stated the purpose of this journey before Sayyidnā Qa'qā' ﷺ as it would appear later. And it is also obvious that the mission of conciliation and betterment among believers at the time of such a terrible trial was really a significant religious service. If, for this purpose, the Ummul-Mu'minīn took to the journey of Baṣrah while accompanied by her Maḥrams and seated in a metal-framed camel litter, why would the Shiites and Rawāfiḍ raise such a dust storm about it and say that the Ummul-Mu'minīn contravened the injunctions of the Qur'ān? What justification is there for it?

Later on the war-like situation, created by the mischief of the hypocrites and the agent provocateurs of disorder, was something even the thought of which had never crossed the mind of Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضی اللہ عنہا. For the explanation of this verse, this much is enough. Onwards from here, this is not the occasion for going into the details of the event of the battle of *Jamal*. But, in order to make the reality clear in brief, a few lines follow.

Circumstances that one confronts in this world at the time of mutual discord simply cannot be neglected by people of insight and experience. The same circumstances developed here too when the journey of Baṣrah

undertaken by Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضی اللہ عنہا in the company of the noble Ṣaḥābah who had come from Madīnah was reported before Sayyidnā 'Alī ﷺ in a totally deformed manner by the hypocrites and the manipulators of disorder. The version they gave to him was that all those people were going to Baṣrah to join up with forces stationed there and from where they would come out to confront him. If he was the Amīr of the time, they instigated, it was his duty to preempt this threat and stop them by going to where they were, lest the danger increases any further. There were noble Ṣaḥābah of the stature of Sayyidnā Ḥasan and Ḥusain, 'Abdullāh Ibn Ja'far and 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Abbās رضی اللہ عنہم اجمعین who even differed with this line of action. The advice they gave was that he should not throw his forces against them until such time that he had the correct assessment of the prevailing situation before him. But, the majority present there was of those who had tendered the first option. Sayyidnā 'Alī ﷺ, also tilting towards the same option, came out with the armed forces, and along with him, came these wicked votaries of disorder and rebellion.

When these gentlemen reached the environs of Baṣrah, they sent Sayyidnā Qa'qā' ﷺ to Ummul-Mu'minīn Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضی اللہ عنہا to find out the circumstances of her visit. They asked her, 'O Mother of the Believers, what was the reason that brought you here?' Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah said, اَیْ بُنَیَّ الْاِصْلَاحُ بَیْنَ النَّاس (My dear son, [I am here to seek nothing but] the betterment of relations between people)'. Then, she also called Sayyidnā Ṭalḥah and Sayyidnā Zubair رضی اللہ عنہما in this meeting with Sayyidnā Qa'qā' ﷺ. He asked them, 'What do you want?' They submitted, 'We want nothing but that the Islamic legal punishment be enforced against the killers of 'Uthmān ﷺ.' In response, Sayyidnā Qa'qā' ﷺ explained by saying, 'This thing cannot be done until Muslim forces are organized and firmly established. Therefore, at this time, it is necessary that you take to a stance of conciliation.'

These blessed souls submitted to the advice. Sayyidnā Qa'qā' ﷺ went to Sayyidnā 'Alī ﷺ and told him about it. He too was very pleased, and satisfied. Everyone decided to go back. For three days, they stayed on the camping grounds in a state that no one had any doubt about the forthcoming declaration of truce between the two parties. And, on the fourth day, this announcement was going to be made and a meeting

between Sayyidnā 'Alī ﷺ and Sayyidnā Ṭalḥah and Zubair ﷺ was due to take place - in which these killers of Sayyidnā 'Uthmān ﷺ were not included. This thing was too hard for them to take. They made a plan. They told their colleagues, 'First you go into the group around Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah and unleash a spate of killing and pillage so that she and her compatriots think that the pledge was broken from the side of Sayyidnā 'Alī, as a result of which, becoming victims of this misunderstanding, they would hurl themselves against the armed forces of Sayyidnā 'Alī.' This satanic device engineered by them worked. So, when the attack on the group accompanying Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضی اللہ عنہا came from the side of the agents of disorder who had infiltrated the forces of Sayyidnā 'Alī ﷺ, they were excusable in taking this attack to have come from the forces of the Amīr al-Mu'minīn - and thus began their counter action in defence. When Sayyidnā 'Alī ﷺ saw this state of affairs, he had no option left but to fight. And the unintended mishap of mutual infighting that was to occur did occur. اِنَّا لِلّٰہِ وَاِنَّا اِلَیْہِ رَاجِعُوْن ! It is exactly like this that this event has been reported by aṭ-Ṭabarī and other reliable historians from the narrations of Sayyidnā 'Abdullah Ibn Ja'far, Sayyidnā 'Abdullah Ibn 'Abbās and others رضی اللہ عنہم اجمعین. (Rūḥ ul-Ma'ānī)

In short, as a result of the wickedness of the agent provocateurs of disorder, this event of fighting between two revered groups came to pass unconsciously. And when this *fitnah* subsided, these very two revered personalities were the ones who were intensely grieved over it. Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضی اللہ عنہا, when recalled this event, would weep so much that her scarf became all wet with her tears. Similarly, Sayyidnā 'Alī ﷺ was also terribly shocked over this event. When, after the *fitnah* had subsided, he went to see the dead bodies of those killed, he beat his thighs with his hands and said, 'Would that, much before this happened, I were dead, forgotten, lost!'

And according to some narrations, when Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضی اللہ عنہا would recite the verse: وَقَرْنَ فِیْ بُیُوْتِکُنَّ (And stay in your homes - 33) in the Holy Qur'ān, she used to break into tears until her scarf would be all wet with tears. (Reported by 'Abdullāh Ibn Aḥmad in Zawā'iduz-Zuhd and Ibn ul-Mundhir and Ibn Abī Shaibah from Masrūq, Rūḥ ul-Ma'ānī)

That she wept on the recital of the cited verse was neither because the contravention of the command of 'staying in homes' was a sin in her sight

nor because the journey was prohibited. Instead of all that, the serious and unwelcome event that came to pass was the cause of her natural grief. (All these narrations and the subject matter have been taken from Tafsīr Rūḥ ul-Maʻānī)

The third, fourth and fifth instruction of the Qur'ān to the blessed wives

Two instructions have appeared in detail earlier. They related to the avoidance of addressing non-Maḥram men softly and tenderly and of going out of homes unnecessarily. Now, the other three instructions are contained in the next sentence of verse 33: وَاَقِمْنَ الصَّلٰوةَ وَاٰتِيْنَ الزَّكٰوةَ وَاَطِعْنَ اللّٰهَ وَرَسُوْلَه (and establish Ṣalāh, and pay Zakāh, and obey Allah and His Messenger). These are a total of five instructions. For women, these are matters of great consequences.

These five instructions apply to all Muslims universally

At least in the case of the later instructions mentioned above, no one can presume that they could be special to the blessed wives. These are Ṣalāh, Zakāh and Obedience to Allah and His Messenger. How can any Muslim anywhere be taken as exempted from these? As for the first two instructions which relate to the *ḥijāb* or *pardah* of women, a little deliberation would make it clear that they too are not special to the blessed wives. In fact, the same injunction applies to all Muslim women. The only question that has to be answered is that the Holy Qur'ān has said before these instructions,: لَسْتُنَّ كَاَحَدٍ مِّنَ النِّسَآءِ اِنِ اتَّقَيْتُنَّ (32) that is, the blessed wives are not like common women, if they take to Taqwā. This sentence apparently indicates to the speciality of the blessed wives. A clear answer to this doubt is that the speciality seen here does not mean that these injunctions are restricted to them, instead, it revolves round the care and concern to be observed in acting in accordance with them. In other words, it means that the blessed wives are not like common women, because the state of their dignity is the highest of all. Therefore, they should show the highest care and concern for following the injunctions made obligatory for all Muslim women. And Allah *subhanahu wa Taʻālā* knows best.

We now move to the last sentence of verse 33 which says: اِنَّمَا يُرِيْدُ اللّٰهُ لِيُذْهِبَ عَنْكُمُ الرِّجْسَ اَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُمْ تَطْهِيْرًا (Allah only intends to keep (all sorts of) filth away from you, O members of the family (of the prophet), and to

make you pure through a perfect purification. - 33). In the verses previous to this, the instructions given to the blessed wives by addressing them directly were, though, not special to them in person, rather, the entire Muslim community is obligated with these injunctions, yet the blessed wives were addressed particularly for the reason that they, in consonance with their dignity and the sanctity of the home of the Prophet, would be showing added care and concern for deeds that match their two singularities. Given in this verse is the wisdom of this particular address, that is, by the special instruction of the betterment of deeds, Allah intends to bless the household of the Messenger of Allah with an ideal state of purity by removing everything counter to it.

The word: الرِّجْس (*ar-rijs*) has been used in the Qur'ān for several meanings. At one place, *ar-rijs* has appeared in the sense of idols: فَاجْتَنِبُوا الرِّجْسَ مِنَ الْأَوْثَانِ (So refrain from the filth of idols - 22:30) and on other occasions, it is used in the sense of sin in absolute terms and at times it is employed to carry the meaning of punishment or impurity or filth. The outcome is that everything which is legally or naturally (or rationally) considered detestable is *ar-rijs*. In the present verse, the word: الرِّجْس (*ar-rijs*) appears in this very general sense. (Al-Baḥr ul-Muḥīṭ)

What does "اَهْلَ بَيْتِ : *Ahl al-Bayt*: People of the House" signify in this verse?

In verses appearing earlier in the present sequence, the address was to the blessed wives of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, therefore, the form used was in the feminine gender. Here, the expression: اَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ (*ahl al-bayt*) includes, along with the blessed wives, their children and fathers as well, therefore, the form used was in the masculine gender, that is: عَنْكُمْ (from you) and: وَيُطَهِّرَكُمْ (purifies you). And some Tafsīr authorities take '*ahl al-bayt*' to mean the blessed wives only. 'Ikrimah and Muqātil have said exactly this. And Sayyidnā Sa'īd Ibn Jubayr رضي الله عنه has reported the same narration from Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه saying that he has declared '*ahl al-bayt*' in this verse to mean the blessed wives and then cited the next verse: وَاذْكُرْنَ مَا يُتْلٰى فِىْ بُيُوْتِكُنَّ (and remember what is recited in your homes -34) as proof (because the address here is to the blessed wives only, as is evident from the feminine gender used in the verse and from the reference to their homes.) [reported by Ibn Abī Ḥātim and Ibn Jarīr). And the words of the address: نِسَآءَ النَّبِيِّ (O women [wives] of the prophet) in the

immediately previous verses are also its contextual evidence. Early commentator 'Ikrimah ... used to go about proclaiming in the bazaars that '*ahl al-bayt*' in the verse means the blessed wives, because this verse has been revealed to highlight their dignified status and he used to say that he was ready to enter into a *mubāhalah** (imprecation) on it.

But, several narrations of Ḥadīth reported by Ibn Katār at this place bear witness that Sayyidah Fāṭimah, Sayyidnā 'Alī and Sayyidnā Ḥasan and Ḥusain رضى الله عنهم اجمعين are also included in 'ahl al-bayt' - as in a Ḥadīth of Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim where Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضى الله عنها narrates: Once the Holy Prophet ﷺ went out of the house with a black sheet from Byzantine wrapped around his blessed body. When Ḥasan Ibn 'Alī رضي الله عنه came out, he took him inside the sheet. Then Sayyidnā Ḥusain رضي الله عنه came. He took him too inside the sheet in the same manner. After that, came Sayyidah Fāṭimah رضى الله عنها and then Sayyidnā 'Alī al-Murtaḍā رضي الله عنه. He also made them come inside the sheet. Thereafter, he recited the verse: إِنَّمَا يُرِيْدُ اللّٰهُ لِيُذْهِبَ عَنْكُمُ الرِّجْسَ اَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُمْ تَطْهِيْرًا (Allah only intends to keep (all sorts of) filth away from you, O members of the family (of the prophet-33). And it also appears in some narrations that, after having recited the verse, he said: اَللّٰهُمَّ هٰٓؤُلَآءِ اَهْلُ بَيْتِيْ (O Allah, these are members of my family) (reported by Ibn Jarīr)

After having reported several reliable *aḥādīth* on this subject, Ibn Kathīr has said: In reality, there is no contradiction in the two sayings reported from Tafsīr authorities. Those who said that this verse was revealed in relation to the high station of the blessed wives and '*ahl al-bayt*' means them does not go contrary to the possible inclusion of other people too under the purview of '*ahl al-bayt*.' Therefore, the sound position is that under the words: '*ahl al-bayt*', the blessed wives are included in any case, because they themselves are the cause of the revelation of this verse. And the inclusion of the direct addressees of the revelation cannot be subjected to any doubt. And Sayyidah Fāṭimah and 'Alī and Ḥasan and Ḥusain رضى الله عنهم اجمعين too - in accordance with the saying of the noble Prophet - are included in '*ahl al-bayt*.' And at both places in this verse, before and after it, the address is to the wives of the prophet using the form of feminine gender. In previous verses, beginning

* A form of resolving religious disputes through bi-partite invocation. For details, please see Ma'ariful-Qur'ān, Volume II, pp. 90, 91.

from: فَلَا تَخْضَعْنَ بِالْقَوْلِ (So, do not be soft with your address - 32) up to the end all forms employed are feminine. Then, later on in: وَاذْكُرْنَ مَا يُتْلٰى (and remember what is recited - 34) the form used in the address is in the feminine gender once again. Now, when the text departs from the context in this verse (33) in between and elects to employ the form of masculine gender as in: عَنْكُمْ (*'ankum*) and: يُطَهِّرَكُمْ (*yuṭahhirakum*), it also becomes a strong evidence of the fact that included here are not only the wives, but some men as well.

As for what has been said in the verse under study: لِيُذْهِبَ عَنْكُمُ الرِّجْسَ اَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُمْ تَطْهِيرًا (Allah only intends to keep (all sorts of) filth away from you, O members of the family (of the prophet-33), it obviously means that, through these instructions, Allah Ta'ālā will keep the *'ahl al-bayt'* protected against satanic instigations, sins and evils and cleanse them pure. In short, what is meant here is legal تشریعی *(tashrī'ī)* purification - not the creational تکوینی*(takwīnī)* purification which is the hallmark of prophets. It does not become necessary thereby that they all be مَعْصُوْم *'ma'ṣūm'* (infallible) and the commission of any sin by them should not be possible as is the case with the noble prophets, may peace be upon them all - which is the distinctive feature of creational purification. The people of Shiite persuasion have, by differing from the majority of the Muslim community, first of all claimed that the expression: *'ahl al-bayt'* is restricted to the progeny and male relatives of the Messenger and that his blessed wives are excluded from it. Then, they went on to declare the word: تَطْهِير (*taṭhīr*: purification) in the cited verse (34) as standing for their عِصْمَه (*'iṣmah*: the state of being protected, infallible) and thus made the *'ahl al-bayt'* اَهْلُ الْبَيْت (*ma'ṣūm*: infallible) like prophets. This humble writer has given an answer to this approach and has taken up the subject in full details in his Aḥkām ul-Qur'ān under Sūrah Al-Aḥzāb. This work defines عِصْمَة : *'ismah*, and proves that it is restricted to prophets and angels and that no one is مَعْصُوْم (*ma'ṣūm*) other than them---all this on the basis of Islamic legal arguments and proofs. People of knowledge may see it at their discretion. Others just do not need it.

The word: آيَاتُ اللّٰهِ (*ayātillah*) in verse 34: وَاذْكُرْنَ مَايُتْلٰى فِىْ بُيُوْتِكُنَّ مِنْ اٰيٰتِ اللّٰهِ وَالْحِكْمَةِ (And be mindful of Allah's verses and the wisdom that is recited in your homes) means the Qur'ān and: حِكْمَة (*ḥikmah*) means the teachings and the *sunnah* of the noble Messenger of Allah - as the commentators at

large have explained حِكْمَة : *ḥikmah* at this place to mean *sunnah*. And the word: اُذْكُرْنَ (*udhkurna*) could have two meanings: (1) To personally remember and be mindful of these verses and the points of wisdom, which should result in acting according to them. (2) To mention and pass on to other members of the Muslim community whatever of the Qur'ān was revealed in their homes before them as well as the teachings of the Holy Prophet ﷺ of which they were the recipients.

Special Note

In his Aḥkām ul-Qur'ān, Ibn al-'Arabī has said: From this verse it stands proved that a person who hears a verse of the Qur'ān, or a statement of Ḥadīth, is duty-bound to convey it to the Muslim *ummah*, so much so that even the blessed wives were bound with the duty of conveying to members of the Muslim community whatever verses of the Qur'ān are revealed in their homes or the teachings that they receive from the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Both were a matter of trust placed by Allah in their hands which they had to pass on to others.

The Protection of Qur'an and Ḥadīth

The way the spreading of the message of the verses of the Qur'ān and the making of arrangements to teach it have been made necessary for the Muslim community, it is in the same way that, by calling it *ḥikmah*, the spreading and teaching of the *aḥādīth* of the Holy Prophet have also been made necessary (in the degree of incumbency). Therefore, the noble Ṣaḥābah, may Allah be pleased with them all, have obeyed and implemented this injunction under all circumstances. There is this incident related to the Sayyidnā Mu'ādh ﷺ in the Ṣaḥīḥ of al-Bukhārī. He heard a Ḥadīth from the Holy Prophet ﷺ ,but he did not narrate it publicly for the reason that he feared that people may not give it the status it deserved or may succumb to some misunderstanding. However, when came the time of his death, he assembled people around him and narrated the Ḥadīth before them and said, 'Up to this time, I had not mentioned it before anyone because of religious expediency. But, now the time of death is near, therefore, I consider it necessary to deliver this thing held in trust back to the Muslim *ummah*, its real owner.' The words of the statement in the Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī are: فَاَخْبَرَ بِهٖ مُعَاذٌ عِنْدَ مَوْتِهٖ تَاَثُّمًا that is, 'Sayyidnā Mu'ādh ﷺ made people hear this Ḥadīth at the time of his death lest he becomes a sinner by not having conveyed the Ḥadīth of the

Rasūl of Allah to the Muslim *ummah*.'

This incident too is an apt testimony to the fact that all Ṣaḥābah considered the implementation of this injunction of the Qur'ān to be obligatory, and necessary. And since the noble Ṣaḥābah had demonstrated the highest care and concern in conveying Ḥadīth to people with utmost precaution, the protection of Ḥadīth too came, in a certain degree, fairly close to that of the Qur'ān. Picking doubts in this matter really amounts to picking doubts in the Qur'ān. Allah knows best.

Verse 35

إِنَّ الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَالْمُسْلِمٰتِ وَالْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنٰتِ وَ الْقٰنِتِينَ
وَالْقٰنِتٰتِ وَالصّٰدِقِينَ وَالصّٰدِقٰتِ وَالصّٰبِرِينَ وَالصّٰبِرٰتِ وَالْخٰشِعِينَ
وَالْخٰشِعٰتِ وَالْمُتَصَدِّقِينَ وَالْمُتَصَدِّقٰتِ وَالصَّآئِمِينَ وَالصّٰئِمٰتِ
وَالْحٰفِظِينَ فُرُوجَهُمْ وَالْحٰفِظٰتِ وَالذّٰكِرِينَ اللّٰهَ كَثِيرًا وَّالذّٰكِرٰتِ
أَعَدَّ اللّٰهُ لَهُمْ مَّغْفِرَةً وَّأَجْرًا عَظِيمًا ﴿٣٥﴾

Surely, Muslim men and Muslim women, believing men and believing women, devout men and devout women, truthful men and truthful women, patient men and patient women, humble men and humble women, and the men who give sadaqah (charity) and the women who give sadaqah, and the men who fast and the women who fast, and the men who guard their private parts (against evil acts) and the women who guard (theirs), and the men who remember Allah much and the women who remember (Him) ---- for them, Allah has prepared forgiveness and a great reward. [35]

Commentary

The Qur'ānic addresses in masculine gender normally include women : The Wisdom behind it

In the usual injunctions of the noble Qur'ān, though, both men and women have been included as addressees, but generally the address is made to men. Women are included there as a corollary. Everywhere, by using the words: يٰٓأَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا (O those who have believed) women have been addressed as being included and contained therein. This releases a

hint suggesting that all matters relating to women are shielded, concealed and curtained. In this, there is honor and esteem for them. Particularly, if we were to ponder over the entire Qur'ān, we shall discover that no woman except Sayyidah Maryam bint 'Imran has been referred to by her personal name. Instead, when comes the occasion to mention them, they have been mentioned under the cover of their attribution to men, such as, اِمْرَأَةُ فِرْعَوْن (the woman or wife of the Pharaoh), اِمْرَأَةُ نُوحٍ (the wife of Nūḥ) and اِمْرَأَةُ لُوطٍ (the wife of Lūṭ). The exception of Sayyidah Maryam may perhaps be for the reason that Sayyidnā 'Īsā عليه السلام could have not been attributed to any father, therefore, the attribution had to be to the mother. So, it was for this attribution that her name was disclosed. And it is Allah who knows best.

Though, this style of the Qur'ān was rooted in great wisdom and expediency, yet it was natural that women should have a feeling of some sort of discomfort about it. Therefore, there are several narrations in Ḥadīth in which women have been reported to have said to the Holy Prophet ﷺ,"We see that Allah Ta'ālā mentions only men everywhere in the Qur'ān and it is them alone that He addresses. This tells us that women have almost no good in them. We are scared about our acts of 'Ibadah. May be, even that is not accepted from us (reported by al-Baghawī from the blessed wives). Similar submissions of this nature from Sayyidah Umm 'Umārah al-Anṣāriyyah appear in Tirmidhī with the authority rating of *ḥasan* (good) and from Sayyidah Asmā' bint 'Umays رضی الله عنها in some other narrations. And in all these narrations, this very submission has been identified as the cause of the revelation of the verse cited above.

In these verses special mention has been made of the acceptability of their deeds to mollify the hearts of women. Here, it has been made very clear that the touchstone of acceptance and appreciation with Allah Ta'ālā is the righteousness of deeds and the spirit of obedience to Him. In this, there is no discrimination between man and woman.

The Injunction of Making the Dhikr of Allah Abundantly and Its Wisdom

Islam stands on five acts of '*Ibādah* or worship - Ṣalāh, Zakāh, Ṣiyām (fasting), Ḥajj and Jihād. But, there is just no injunction in the entire Qur'ān that commands any act of *'Ibadah* from out of these to be done

abundantly. However, the doing of the Dhikr (remembrance) of Allah (by heart or tongue) abundantly has been ordered in several verses of the Holy Qur'ān as in Sūrah Al-Anfal (8:45) and Sūrah Al-Jumu'ah (62:10) while in the present verse of Sūrah Al-Aḥzāb it was said: وَالذّٰكِرِيْنَ اللّٰهَ كَثِيْرًا وَّالذّٰكِرٰتِ (and the men remembering Allah much and the remembering women - 35).

What is the wisdom behind it? To begin with, it can be said that the Dhikr of Allah is the essential spirit of all acts of worship as it appears in a narration of Sayyidnā Mu'ādh Ibn Anas ﷺ. Someone asked the Holy Prophet ﷺ,"Who from among the Mujahidin deserves the best of returns?" He said, "One who makes the Dhikr of Allah most abundantly." It was asked again, "Who from among the fasting is most reward-worthy?" He said, "One who makes the Dhikr of Allah most abundantly." Then, similar questions were asked about Ṣalāh, Zakāh, Ḥajj and Ṣadaqah. Every time he said: 'One who makes the Dhikr of Allah most abundantly,' that is, he or she is more deserving of the reward (reported by Ahmad, from Ibn Kathir)

Secondly, it is the easiest of all acts of 'Ibadah. The Shari'ah too has placed no condition for it. Be it with *wuḍū'* or without, be it lying, sitting, or walking, the Dhikr of Allah can be done at all times. It demands no hard labor from anyone nor does it require any formal free time. Yet, so great is the effect and benefit of the Dhikr of Allah that, through it, even worldly chores transform into worship and religious acts. The prayers that are made before and after eating, on going out and on coming back, before travel, in travel and on returning home, and before and after starting a business have all been taught to us by the Holy Prophet ﷺ. The outcome of this enormous treasure of prophetic prayers is that no Muslim should do anything at any time while he or she may be heedless toward or negligent of Allah. And should one make it a point to recite these prayers as part of what he or she has to do in life and its work, then, *dunyā* becomes *dīn*,i.e. worldly duties start releasing the fragrance of faith, a wonderful experience indeed.

Verses 36 - 39

وَمَا كَانَ لِمُؤْمِنٍ وَّلَا مُؤْمِنَةٍ اِذَا قَضَى اللّٰهُ وَرَسُوْلُهٗٓ اَمْرًا اَنْ يَّكُوْنَ

لَهُمُ الْخِيَرَةُ مِنْ اَمْرِهِمْ ؕ وَمَنْ يَّعْصِ اللّٰهَ وَ رَسُوْلَهٗ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ ضَلٰلًا
مُّبِيْنًا ﴿٣٦﴾ وَاِذْ تَقُوْلُ لِلَّذِیْۤ اَنْعَمَ اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَاَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِ اَمْسِكْ
عَلَيْكَ زَوْجَكَ وَاتَّقِ اللّٰهَ وَتُخْفِیْ فِیْ نَفْسِكَ مَا اللّٰهُ مُبْدِيْهِ وَتَخْشَى
النَّاسَ ۚ وَاللّٰهُ اَحَقُّ اَنْ تَخْشٰهُ ؕ فَلَمَّا قَضٰى زَيْدٌ مِّنْهَا وَطَرًا زَوَّجْنٰكَهَا
لِكَیْ لَا يَكُوْنَ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ حَرَجٌ فِیْۤ اَزْوَاجِ اَدْعِيَآئِهِمْ اِذَا قَضَوْا
مِنْهُنَّ وَطَرًا ؕ وَكَانَ اَمْرُ اللّٰهِ مَفْعُوْلًا ﴿٣٧﴾ مَا كَانَ عَلَى النَّبِیِّ مِنْ
حَرَجٍ فِيْمَا فَرَضَ اللّٰهُ لَهٗ ؕ سُنَّةَ اللّٰهِ فِى الَّذِيْنَ خَلَوْا مِنْ قَبْلُ ؕ وَكَانَ
اَمْرُ اللّٰهِ قَدَرًا مَّقْدُوْرًا ﴿٣٨﴾ الَّذِيْنَ يُبَلِّغُوْنَ رِسٰلٰتِ اللّٰهِ وَيَخْشَوْنَهٗ
وَلَا يَخْشَوْنَ اَحَدًا اِلَّا اللّٰهَ ؕ وَكَفٰى بِاللّٰهِ حَسِيْبًا ﴿٣٩﴾

And it is not open for a believing man or a believing woman -- once Allah and His messenger have decided a thing -- that they should have a choice about their matter. And whoever disobeys Allah and His messenger, he indeed gets off the track, falling into an open error. [36] **And (remember) when you were saying to the one who was favored by Allah and favored by you," Keep your wife to your self, and fear Allah." And you were concealing in your heart what Allah was going to reveal. and you were fearing people, while Allah is more entitled to be feared by you. So, when Zaid finished his desire for her, We gave her into your marriage, so that there may not be a problem for the believers in marrying wives of their adopted sons, when they finish their desire for them. And Allah's decree had to be enforced.** [37] **There is no problem for the prophet in (doing) what Allah has prescribed for him, a customary practice of Allah in the case of those who have gone before--- And Allah's command is pre-determined by destiny----.** [38] **those who convey the messages of Allah and have awe of Him and have no awe of anyone except Allah. And Allah is sufficient to take account (of everyone).** [39]

Commentary

It has been repeatedly explained earlier that the majority of

injunctions appearing in Sūrah Al-Aḥzāb relate to the reverence, love and perfect obedience of the Holy Prophet ﷺ or to the prohibition of causing any pain to him. The verses cited above have also been revealed in connection with some incidents of this nature.

One such incident related to Sayyidnā Zayd Ibn Ḥārithah who was the slave of someone. It was during the days of Jāhiliyyah that the Holy Prophet ﷺ had bought him from the famous bazaar of 'Ukāẓ. He was still very young at that time. The Holy Prophet ﷺ had freed him after purchasing him, and further honored him by adopting him as his son as was the common practice under the Arab custom of the time and went on to bring him up. In Makkah al-Mukarramah, he was called by the name of Zayd Ibn Muḥammad ﷺ. The Qur'ān declared it to be an erroneous custom of the Jāhiliyyah and prohibited the calling of the so-called or adopted son of a person as his 'son' and ordered that he should be attributed to his real father. Revealed in this connection were verses that have appeared earlier within this Sūrah: اُدْعُوْهُمْ لِاٰبَآئِهِمْ (Call them by (the name of) their (real) fathers - 5) After the revelation of these injunctions, the noble Ṣaḥābah abandoned the practice of calling him by the name of Zayd Ibn Muḥammad ﷺ and started attributing him to his father, Ḥārithah.

A subtle point

Not even the name of the greatest of the great Ṣaḥābī - of course, except that of the blessed prophets - was ever mentioned throughout the Qur'ān with the sole exception of Sayyidnā Zayd Ibn Ḥārithah! Some respected elders while describing the wisdom behind it have said that the attribution of his parentage to the Holy Prophet ﷺ when severed under the injunction of the Qur'ān had him deprived of a great personal honor. However, Allah Ta'ālā had it compensated by mentioning him in the Qur'ān by name. Thus, the word: زَيْد (Zayd), being a word of the Qur'ān, has its own distinct status. On every letter of this word, in accordance with the promise in Ḥadīth, ten good deeds are recorded in the Book of Deeds. So, when his name is recited in the Qur'ān, the reciter gets thirty good deeds in return just for pronouncing his name!

Even the Holy Prophet ﷺ used to give him respect. Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضی الله عنها says, 'Whenever he has sent him on a military expedition, it is invariably him that he has made the commander of the forces.' (Ibn Kathīr)

A lesson to remember

This, in a nutshell, was the reality of slavery at the advent of Islam when slaves were educated and trained till they became achievers and whoever from them proved his class and capability was given the rank of leaders.

When Zayd Ibn Ḥārithah grew to be a young man, the Holy Prophet ﷺ chose Sayyidah Zainab bint Jaḥsh, the daughter of his paternal aunt for marriage with him. A formal proposal of marriage was sent. Since Sayyidnā Zayd was branded with the conventional label of being a freed slave, Sayyidah Zainab and her brother, 'Abdullah Ibn Jaḥsh rejected this proposal on the basis that they were nobler than him in terms of family and lineage.

Revealed upon this incident was the verse: مَا كَانَ لِمُؤْمِنٍ وَّلَا مُؤْمِنَةٍ (And it is not open for a believing man or a believing woman - 36). The instruction given there is: When the Holy Prophet ﷺ orders someone to do something as an obligation, it becomes obligatory for that person to do it. The choice of not doing it does not remain valid under Islamic Law - even if the required act may not be obligatory or necessary in its origin. But, once he does order someone to do that, it become incumbent and obligatory on him. And should someone not do so, his or her action has been termed as open error at the end of the verse.

When Sayyidah Zainab bint Jaḥsh and her brother heard this verse, they retracted from their rejection and agreed to the proposal of marriage. Thus, the marriage was solemnized. The dower of the bride was paid by the Holy Prophet ﷺ on behalf of Sayyidnā Zayd which was ten *dīnārs* [equal to approximately 4 *tola*s of gold), sixty *dirhams* (equal to approximately 18 1/2 *tola*s of silver), one beast of burden, complete pair of ladies dress, 15 *mudd* (approximately 25 kilos) of flour and 10 *mudd* (approximately 5 kilos) of dates (Ibn Kathīr). The well-known event in the background of the revelation of this verse is, according to the majority of commentators, no other but this very account of the marriage of Sayyidah Zainab bint Jaḥsh (Ibn Kathīr, Qurṭubī and Maẓharī).

Ibn Kathīr and some other commentators have also reported two additional events of this nature. There too, it has been said that the cited verse has been revealed in the background of those events. One of these

events is about Sayyidnā Julaibīb ﷺ whose proposal to marry the daughter of an Anṣārī Ṣaḥābī was turned down by the father and his family. When this verse was revealed, they agreed and the marriage was solemnized. The Holy Prophet ﷺ made a *du'ā'* (prayer)for extended means of livelihood for them. The noble Companions say that Allah had placed such *barakah* in their home that it was known to be the most generously kept home of Madīnah āṭ-Ṭayyibah. Later, Sayyidnā Julaibīb ﷺ met with his *shahadah* in a Jihād. The Holy Prophet ﷺ bathed and shrouded his body with his own blessed hands.

A similar event relating to Umm Kulthūm bint 'Uqbah Ibn Abī Mu'aiṭ has been reported in Ḥadīth narrations (Ibn Kathīr, Qurṭubī) and there is no contradiction in them. It is possible that several events of this nature may have been the cause of the revelation of the verse.

The Injunction to consider the principle of كفو (*kuf'*) in marriage

The reason why Sayyidah Zainab bint Jaḥsh and her brother 'Abdullah had initially rejected the proposal of marriage with Sayyidnā Zayd Ibn Ḥārithah was that the two of them had no familial and lineal homogeneity, which is desirable even in the sight of the Sharī'ah. The Holy Prophet ﷺ said that girls should be married in their كفو (*kuf'*: equal, alike, matching) (to be explained later). Therefore, a question arises here as to why the excuse of Sayyidah Zainab and her brother was not accepted in this case?

The answer is that the equality, rather equalness (كفاءت :*kafā'ah*) and likeness of spouses in their religion is certainly incumbent and necessary for the validity of the marriage. The marriage of any Muslim girl with any disbeliever is not *ḥalāl* (lawful) under the consensus of the Muslim *ummah* - even if the girl agrees to it. The reason is that this is not simply the right of a woman which may be dropped at her pleasure. Instead, it is the right of Allah and a Divinely imposed duty. On the contrary, equality of the spouses in financial and lineal status is the right of the girl and in the matter of lineal equality, the guardians too have right alongwith the girl. If a sane and adult girl, despite being from a wealthy family, were to drop her right by agreeing to marry some pauper, the choice is hers. And in lineal equality, if the girl and her guardians, all of them, abandon this right for the sake of some other major expedient consideration and agree to the proposal of marriage from a person who is lesser than them in

terms of lineage and family status, then, they have the right to do so. In fact, should this be in view of higher religious consideration, the act of surrendering this right is most desirable and praiseworthy. It is for this reason that the Holy Prophet ﷺ has, on several occasions, recommended that this right should be ignored and marriage should be solemnized because of higher and more beneficial religious considerations.

And clear indicators set forth in the noble Qur'ān prove that the right of the Holy Prophet ﷺ on the men and women of his ummah is more than that of anyone else. In fact, it is more than that of their own self - as the Qur'ān says: اَلنَّبِیُّ اَوْلٰی بِالْمُؤْمِنِیْنَ مِنْ اَنْفُسِهِمْ that is, 'The Prophet is closer to the believers than their own selves - 33:6.' Therefore, in the case of Sayyidah Zainab and her brother, 'Abdullah, when the Holy Prophet ﷺ advised them to ignore their right to lineal equality and ordered them to agree to the marriage with Sayyidnā Zayd Ibn Ḥārithah, it was their duty to bypass their personal opinion and their own rights in the face of this prophetic order. Therefore, it was on this refusal from them that this injunction of the Qur'ān was revealed.

As for the lineal consideration in marriage, one may ask when it was worthy of consideration in the sight of the Holy Prophet ﷺ himself, why would he himself not go by it? The answer to this doubt is already clear from the earlier submission, that is, this consideration is worth surrendering in favour of other higher and more beneficial religeous considerations. During the blessed period of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, several marriages were solemnized among non-equals (*ghayr-kuf')* as based on these very kinds of beneficial religeous considerations which do not violate the principle.

The Issue of Equality in marriage (*Kafā'ah*)

Marriage (*nikāḥ*) is a matter in which the absence of homogeneity in the temperaments of the spouses disturbs the purpose of marriage, disturbs the process of fulfilling each other's rights and breeds mutual disputes. Therefore, the Sharī'ah has ordered that *kafā'ah* (mutual likeness) should be taken into consideration. But, it never means that a man of high family background starts taking a man from a family lesser than him as low and mean. In Islam, the criterion of low and high is based on Taqwā and love for one's faith. Whoever does not have it, no matter how noble his family is, he yet has no status in the sight of Allah.

So, this order to take *kafā'ah* (mutual equality) into consideration in marriages has been given only to keep the management of matters smooth and straight.

In a Ḥadīth, the Holy Prophet ﷺ has been reported to have said that the *nikāḥ* (marriage) of girls should invariably be through their guardians (that is, it is not appropriate even for a pubescent girl that she settles the transaction of her *nikāḥ* (marriage) all by herself. Modesty demands that this matter should be handled by her parents and guardians). And he said that the *nikāḥ* of girls should invariably be solemnized within their *kuf'* (equal, like). Though, the authority of this Ḥadīth is weak but, with the support from the reports and sayings of the noble Ṣaḥābah, it becomes worth being used as an argument. In Kitāb ul-'Āthār, Imam Muḥammad has reported Sayyidnā 'Umar saying: "I shall issue an operative order that no girl from some high and recognized family should be given in marriage to another having a lesser status." Similarly, Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضی اللہ عنہا and Sayyidnā Anas رضی اللہ عنہ have also stressed that *kafā'ah* (likeness) should be taken into consideration in *nikāḥ* (marriage) - as reported from several authorities. Imām Ibn Humām has also written about it in details in Fatḥ al-Qadīr.

Hence, the outcome is that the consideration of *kafā'ah* (equalness and likeness) in *nikāḥ* (marriage) is desirable in religion, so that the spouses live in accord and harmony. But, should some other important consideration, more important than this *kafā'ah*, come up, then, it is permissible for the woman and her guardians that they surrender this right of theirs and marry in *ghayr kuf'*, that is, other than equal and like. Particularly so, when there is some religeous consideration in sight - if so, it is better and more merit worthy to do so, as proved from several events pertaining to the noble Ṣaḥābah. Incidentally, from this we also know that these events do not negate the basic premise of the issue of *kafā'ah*. Allah knows best.

The Second Event

As ordered by the Holy Prophet ﷺ, the marriage of Sayyidah Zainab bint Jaḥsh رضی اللہ عنہا was solemnized with Sayyidnā Zayd Ibn Ḥārithah رضی اللہ عنہ. But, their temperaments did not match and merge with each other. Sayyidnā Zayd used to complain about the sharpness of her tongue, the airs she assumed because of her inborn lineal nobility and her failure to

listen to him. On the other side, the Holy Prophet ﷺ was informed through revelation that Zayd would divorce her whereafter she would be married to him. On a certain day, Sayyidnā Zayd presented these very complaints before the Holy Prophet ﷺ and showed his intention to divorce her. The Holy Prophet ﷺ had, though, come to know through Divine revelation that things would transpire in a way that Zayd would divorce her after which she would be married to him, but it was for two reasons that he stopped Sayyidnā Zayd from giving a divorce. Firstly, because giving a divorce, though permissible in the Shari'ah of Islam, it is not desirable. In fact, it is the most detested and repugnant of things permissible - and the happening of something as a creational (*Takwīnī*) imperative does not affect the operative religio-legal order (*al-ḥukm at-tashrī'ī*). Secondly, also crossing his blessed heart there was the thought: If Zayd were to give divorce and Zainab were to be married to him consequently, the Arabs would, very much in line with their custom of the Jāhiliyyah, throw taunts on him that he had married the wife of his son. Although, the Qur'ān has already demolished this custom of Jāhiliyyah in the previous verse of this very Sūrah Al-Aḥzāb, following which there was no danger for a believer, even no scruple about it. But disbelievers, who reject the authority of the Qur'ān itself, would still come out with their taunts because of their pagan custom of taking an adopted son as the real son in all aspects of the Law. This very apprehension also became the cause of his prohibiting Sayyidnā Zayd from divorcing his wife. Revealed thereupon was an endearing reprimand from Allah Ta'ālā in the following verses of the Qur'ān:

وَإِذْ تَقُوْلُ لِلَّذِیْٓ اَنْعَمَ اللّٰهُ عَلَیْهِ وَاَنْعَمْتَ عَلَیْهِ اَمْسِکْ عَلَیْکَ زَوْجَکَ وَاتَّقِ اللّٰهَ
وَتُخْفِیْ فِیْ نَفْسِکَ مَا اللّٰهُ مُبْدِیْهِ وَتَخْشَی النَّاسَ ۚ وَاللّٰهُ اَحَقُّ اَنْ تَخْشٰهُ ؕ

And (remember) when you were saying to the one who was favored by Allah and favored by you," Keep your wife to your self, and fear Allah." And you were concealing in your heart what Allah was going to reveal, and you were fearing people, while Allah is more entitled to be feared by you. (33:37)

The 'one favored' referred to here means Sayyidnā Zayd and the first favour bestowed on him by Allah was that he was made a Muslim and secondly, that he was given the honor of staying in the company of the Messenger of Allah. As for the favour done to him by the Holy Prophet

ﷺ, the first thing he did was that he gave him his freedom from slavery. Secondly, he favored him by grooming and training him under his personal charge, he made him into a person who was respected even by the greatest of the great among the Ṣaḥābah. Onwards from here appears what he said to Sayyidnā Zayd: اَمۡسِکۡ عَلَیۡکَ زَوۡجَکَ وَاتَّقِ اللّٰہَ (Keep your wife to your self and fear Allah). It means: 'Hold your wife in your bond of marriage, and do not divorce her and fear Allah.' The order to fear Allah at this place could also be taken to mean that divorce is a detested and repugnant act from which he should abstain. And it could also be taken in the sense that once he decides to hold her in his *nikāḥ,* let not his temperamental distaste become a cause of falling short in the fulfillment of her due rights. What the Holy Prophet ﷺ said was correct and sound in its place. But, after having learnt about the event as it would transpire through Divine revelation and after the intention of *nikāḥ* with Sayyidah Zainab having emerged in his heart, this advice of not divorcing given to Sayyidnā Zayd had remained at the level of a sort of formal expression of good wishes - something not appropriate to the station of a messenger of Allah, particularly so because, alongwith it, included therein was the apprehension of taunts from the people. Therefore, in the cited verse, the admonition was revealed in the words which mean, 'you were concealing in your heart what Allah was going to reveal.' When the information about his marriage with Sayyidah Zainab was conveyed to him from Allah and the intention of marriage had already crossed his heart, then, the act of hiding this intention and indulging in such formal remarks was not appropriate to his station. As for the apprehension of taunts from people, it was said, 'and you were fearing people, while Allah is more entitled to be feared by you - (37). In other words, 'when you knew that this thing is going to take place as a matter destined by Allah Ta'ālā - without there being any apprehension or danger of His displeasure in that case - then, simply because of the apprehension of taunts from people, such remarks were not appropriate.'

The details of this event appearing above have all been taken from Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr, Qurṭubī and Rūḥ ul-Ma'ānī. As for the particular *tafsīr* of the verse: تُخۡفِیۡ فِیۡ نَفۡسِکَ مَا اللّٰہُ مُبۡدِیۡہِ (you were concealing in your heart what Allah was going to reveal - 37) that is, 'the thing that he kept to himself was the intention that should Zayd give the divorce, he would

marry her in accordance with the Divine decree' - this *tafsir* was reported by Tirmidhī, Ibn Abī Ḥātim and other Ḥadīth experts from a narration of Sayyidnā 'Alī Ibn Ḥusain Zain ul-'Ābidīn. Its words are as follows:

اَوْحَى اللّٰهُ تَعَالٰى اِلَيْهِ صَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ اَنَّ زَيْنَبَ سَيُطَلِّقُهَا زَيْدٌ وَّيَتَزَوَّجُهَا بَعْدَہٗ عَلَيْهِ الصَّلٰوةُ وَالسَّلَامُ (روح از حکیم ترمذی)

> Allah Ta'ālā had informed the Holy Prophet ﷺ through revelation that Zainab is going to be divorced by Zayd and after that she was to be married to him - Rūḥ ul-Ma'ānī from Tirmidhī.

And Ibn Kathīr has reported the following words with reference to Ibn Abī Ḥātim:

اِنَّ اللّٰهَ اَعْلَمَ نَبِيَّہٗ اَنَّهَا سَتَكُوْنُ مِنْ اَزْوَاجِهٖ قَبْلَ اَنْ يَّتَزَوَّجَهَا فَلَمَّا اَتَاهُ زَيْدٌ لِيَشْكُوْهَا اِلَيْهِ قَالَ اِتَّقِ اللّٰهَ وَاَمْسِکْ عَلَيْکَ زَوْجَکَ فَقَالَ اَخْبَرْتُکَ اِنِّیْ مُزَوِّجُكَهَا وَتُخْفِیْ فِیْ نَفْسِکَ مَا اللّٰهُ مُبْدِيْهِ

> Allah Ta'ālā had made His prophet know that she (Sayyidah Zainab) will also become one of his blessed wives. After that, when Zayd came to him with a complaint against her, he said, 'Fear Allah, keep your wife, do not divorce her.' Thereupon, Allah Ta'ālā said, 'I had made it known to you that I shall have her married to you, and you were concealing in your heart the thing that Allah was going to disclose.'

The majority of commentators - Zuhrī, Bakr Ibn al-'Alā', al-Qushairī and Qāḍī Abū Bakr Ibn al-'Arabī - have adopted this very *tafsir*, that is, the mention of the thing he was keeping to himself was but this intention of marriage under Divine revelation. Counter to this there are narrations in which the words," and you were concealing in your heart" have been explained as love for Zainab. About this *tafsīr*, Ibn Kathīr has said, 'we did not like to mention these narrations as none of these is sound.'

Then the words of the Qur'ān themselves lend support to this very *tafsīr* mentioned above on the authority of Sayyidnā Zain ul-'Ābidīn because, in this verse, Allah Ta'ālā has Himself said very clearly that the thing hidden in the heart was what Allah Ta'ālā is going to disclose - and the thing that Allah Ta'ālā disclosed in the next verse (37) is *nikah* or marriage with Sayyidah Zainab as said in: زَوَّجْنٰكَهَا (We gave her into your marriage -37) (Rūḥ ul-Ma'ānī)

To protect oneself against taunts thrown by people is praiseworthy unless it affects some objective of the Shari'ah

A question arises here as to why the Holy Prophet ﷺ chose to conceal this matter which became the cause of Divine displeasure only to avoid the taunts of a hostile people? To answer that, it can be said that there is an essential general rule in this matter which stands proved from the Qur'ān and Sunnah. According to this rule, when doing an act may cause misunderstanding among people or may invite their taunts, then, in order to protect the faith of people and save them from the sin of throwing taunts, it is permissible to avoid that act, subject to the condition that this act itself should not be one of the objectives of the Shari'ah, and no religeous injunction of *ḥalāl* and *ḥarām* is related with it - even though, the act in itself be praiseworthy. In this matter, a precedent exists in the Ḥadīth and Sunnah of the Holy Prophet ﷺ who said: When the Baytullah was constructed during the period of Jāhiliyyah, several things have been done contrary to the original structure laid out by Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm ﷺ. First of all, some part of Baytullah was left outside the constructed area. Then, there were two doors for people to enter inside the Baytullah in the original foundational plan of Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm ﷺ, one towards the East and another towards the West because of which there used to be no difficulty with the entry in and exit from Baytullah. The people of the Jāhiliyyah made two unwarranted changes in it. They blocked the Western door totally and raised the Eastern door which used to be at ground level so high that no one could enter inside it without the help of a ladder. The purpose was to let only those they permitted go in.

The Holy Prophet ﷺ said: 'Had there been no danger of throwing neo-Muslims into misunderstanding, I would have raised the Baytullah once again in accordance with the Abrahimic foundation.' This Ḥadīth is present in all authentic books. From this we know that it was to save people from misunderstanding that the Holy Prophet ﷺ abandoned this intention of his, an intention which was, otherwise, praiseworthy in the light of the Sharī'ah. And against this there came no admonition from Allah which also shows that this conduct of his was acceptable with Him. But, this matter of reconstructing the Baytullah in accordance with the Abrahimic foundation was not something among the objective of Shari'ah, nor something relating to the precepts of *ḥalāl* and *ḥarām*.

As for the event of the marriage of Sayyidah Zainab رضی اللہ عنہا, there was an Islamic legal objective to be achieved therewith, that is, to refute an evil custom of the Jāhiliyyah and to dispel, practically and openly, the erroneous notion of marriage being unlawful with the divorced wife of an adopted son. The reason is that eradication of wrong customs, dragging on and on among peoples for ages, becomes actually possible only when it is implemented practically and demonstrated openly. The Divine command had unfolded to fulfill this objective in a perfect manner in the case of the marriage of Sayyidah Zainab رضی اللہ عنہا. On the basis of this deposition, the apparent dichotomy between the abandonment of the reconstruction of Baytullah and the implementation of the marriage of Sayyidah Zainab as Divinely ordained stands resolved, and answered.

And it seems that the Holy Prophet ﷺ took the oral communication of this injunction which has appeared in the earlier verses of Sūrah Al-Aḥzāb (Verses 4 & 5) as sufficient for declaring the law, while the need and wisdom of its practical demonstration escaped his attention. Therefore, he let it remain concealed despite the knowledge and intention. Allah Ta'ālā put it right and said: لِكَيْ لَا يَكُونَ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ حَرَجٌ فِي أَزْوَاجِ أَدْعِيَائِهِمْ إِذَا قَضَوْا مِنْهُنَّ وَطَرًا (so that there may not be a problem for the believers in marrying wives of their adopted sons, when they finish their desire for them - 37). It means: We gave Zainab in marriage to you so that Muslims do not have to face any practical difficulty in marrying the divorced wives of adopted sons.

And the statement: زَوَّجْنٰكَهَا literally means: 'We solemnized her *nikah* with you' or 'We gave her into your marriage.' This tells us that Allah Ta'ālā blessed this *nikāḥ* with such distinction that He Himself solemnized it - which makes it exempt from the usual conditions of *nikāḥ* or marriage. And it could also mean : 'We gave the command for this *nikāḥ*, now you marry her in accordance with the Islamic rules and conditions.' Some of the commentators have preferred the first probability while some others have gone by the second.

As for the saying of Sayyidah Zainab رضی اللہ عنہا before other women, "Your *nikāḥ* was done by your parents. My *nikāḥ* was done by Allah Ta'ālā Himself on the heavens," which appears in Ḥadīth narrations, it turns out to be true both ways. Under the first probability, it is very clear while the other one too is not contrary to it.

Prefacing an answer to doubts and objections

The opening sentence of verse 38: سُنَّةَ اللّٰهِ فِي الَّذِيْنَ خَلَوْا مِنْ قَبْلُ ؕ وَكَانَ اَمْرُاللّٰهِ قَدَرًا مَّقْدُوْرًا (a customary practice of Allah in the case of those who have gone before--- And Allah's command is pre-determined by destiny - 38) is a preface to doubts to be encountered in the wake of this marriage, particularly about why so much concern was shown in the case of this marriage despite there being other wives in the household. It was said: 'This is a *sunnah* of Allah (His customary practice not restricted to Muḥammad al-Muṣṭafā ﷺ. It has continued to be so in the case of earlier prophets as well, that is, under the dictate of beneficial religeous considerations, permission was given for multiple marriages. Well recognized among them are Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام and Sayyidnā Sulaiman عليه السلام. Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام had one hundred wives in his *nikāḥ* and Sayyidnā Sulaiman عليه السلام, three hundred. Now, if permission came for the Holy Prophet ﷺ to have several marriages under beneficial religeous considerations - this *nikāḥ* being included therein - why should it be taken as something far-fetched? Neither is it contrary to the dignity and status of a prophet and messenger of Allah, nor against the norms of *zuhd* and *taqwā*. In the last sentence, it was also said that the matter of *nikāḥ* (marriage) too, like that of *rizq* or sustenance, is Divinely decided as to who will be married to whom. That which is written in the eternal destiny has to occur. In this event relating to Sayyidnā Zayd رضي الله عنه and Sayyidah Zainab رضی اللہ عنہا, the factors of their mutual temperamental difference, the displeasure of Sayyidnā Zayd and then his resolve to divorce her were all chains of this very creational and destined imperative.

Mentioned next are particular attributes of the prophets علیہم السلام about whom we have learnt a while ago that they were permitted to have several wives in earlier times. It was said: اَلَّذِيْنَ يُبَلِّغُوْنَ رِسٰلٰتِ اللّٰهِ (those who convey the messages of Allah and have awe of Him and have no awe of anyone except Allah - 39), that is, all these esteemed prophets, may peace be upon them, convey the messages of Allah to their respective communities without fear of anyone.

A wise consideration

Perhaps, in this, there may be a hint towards the wisdom behind the multiplicity of marriages allowed to the noble prophets علیہم السلام in that

all their sayings and doings must necessarily reach their communities, while being men, they spend a substantial part of their time in the section of the house where women and children live. During this time, if there comes a revelation or the prophet himself gives some order or does something, it all becomes a property held by their wives in trust on behalf of the community which can be transferred to it through wives alone. Other alternates are not free of difficulties. Therefore, should prophets have several wives, it would become easier to convey accounts of their words and deeds and their personal character in family life. Allah knows best.

The second attribute of the noble prophets has been described as: وَيَخْشَوْنَهٗ وَلَا يَخْشَوْنَ اَحَدًا اِلَّا اللّٰهَ (and have awe of Him and have no awe of anyone except Allah - 39). It means that these prophets keep fearing Allah and fear none but Allah. It is also included there that they, if appointed to preach something by practicing it as based on beneficial religeous consideration, never fall short in it - and if some people throw taunts at them for doing so, they do not fear it.

A doubt and its answer

Here, while mentioning the prophets, it has been said that they do not fear anyone except Allah. But, in the verse previous to it while referring to the Holy Prophet ﷺ it was said: تَخْشَى النَّاسَ (you fear people - 37). How would this be correct? The answer is that, in the cited verse, this matter of prophets not fearing anyone other than Allah has been mentioned in connection with the conveying of Divine messages while the Holy Prophet ﷺ, faced the fear of being taunted in a matter which was obviously of a worldly nature. It had nothing to do with his mission and prophethood. But, as soon as it became clear to him from the cited verses that this marriage too was a part of the practical aspect of his mission and prophethood, no fear of taunts, thereafter, from anyone stopped him from doing what he had to. And this marriage took place despite the objections raised by many disbelievers - which they still keep doing.

Verse 40

مَا كَانَ مُحَمَّدٌ اَبَآ اَحَدٍ مِّنْ رِّجَالِكُمْ وَلٰكِنْ رَّسُوْلَ اللّٰهِ وَخَاتَمَ
النَّبِيّٖنَ ۭ وَكَانَ اللّٰهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيْمًا ﴿٤٠﴾

Muḥammad is not a father of any of your men, but he is a messenger of Allah and the last of the prophets. And Allah is Knowledgeable of every thing. [40]

Commentary

The verse quoted above refutes the contention of those people who, in accordance with the custom of the days of ignorance, used to call Sayyidnā Zayd Ibn Harithah ﷺ as son of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and used to taunt at the *nikah* (marriage) of the Holy Prophet ﷺ with Sayyidah Zainab رضی اللہ عنہا , after she had been divorced by Sayyidnā Zayd Ibn Harithah ﷺ that the Holy Prophet ﷺ had married his son's wife. It was enough to say in refutation that the father of Sayyidnā Zayd ﷺ is not the Holy Prophet ﷺ but Harithah ﷺ. But in order to emphasis the matter, the statement has been generalized in the following words: (مَا كَانَ مُحَمَّدٌ اَبَآ اَحَدٍ مِّنْ رِّجَالِكُمْ) (Muḥammad ﷺ is not a father of any of your men). The sense is that the Holy Prophet ﷺ has no son at all. How can it be asserted against him that he has a son and that his divorced wife is forbidden to him because of being his son's wife?

A brief expression for this statement could have been مَا كَانَ مُحَمَّدٌ اَبَآ اَحَدٍ مِّنْكُمْ(Muḥammad is not a father of any of you). But the wise Qur'ān, by adding the word (رجال) (any of your men) has removed a possible objection that the Holy Prophet ﷺ is father of four sons - three sons Qāsim, Ṭayyib and Ṭāhir ﷺ born to Sayyidah Khadijah رضی اللہ عنہا and Ibrāhīm ﷺ born to Sayyidah Mariyah al- Qibṭiyyah رضی اللہ عنہا but all of them died during childhood and none of them reached manhood. It can also be said that at the time of revelation of this verse, none of his sons was alive, because Qāsim ﷺ, Ṭayyib and Ṭāhir had died, while Ibrāhīm ﷺ was not born at that time.

Although the objection of the opponents had been adequately replied by the above sentence, yet in order to remove other doubts as well, it is stated وَلٰكِنْ رَّسُوْلَ اللّٰهِ (but a messenger of Allah). The word لکن *lakin* (but) is used in Arabic language to remove any doubt that could be raised about the preceding statement. In this case, a doubt could be raised against the negation of the statement that the Holy Prophet ﷺ is not a father of any one. One could say that every prophet and messenger is the father of every man and women of his Ummah, and therefore the negation of his fatherhood would be tantamount to negation of his prophethood. This

doubt has been dispelled by لٰكِنْ رَّسُوْلَ اللهِ (but a messenger of Allah) which means that the rules regarding permissibility or impermissibility of marriage are applicable to the real and biological fatherhood that is quite different from a spiritual fatherhood enjoyed by the prophets in relation to the members of their Ummah. In this relationship these laws do not apply. Now the meaning of the full sentence is that the Holy Prophet ﷺ is not the biological father of any of the men of the Ummah but he is the spiritual father of all of them.

This is also a rejoinder for another sarcasm that some Mushriks (polytheists) had uttered against the Holy Prophet ﷺ that (Allah forbid) he is اَبْتَر (issueless) that is, since he has no male offspring to continue the lineage and to propagate his message further; after a few days the whole story would come to an end. The above words have made it clear that although he has no biological sons, yet the biological sons are not in any case essential to spread the message of prophethood or to maintain and propagate it. This function is normally performed by one's followers who are his spiritual children, and since he is the spiritual father of the whole Ummah who are there to carry forward his mission, he excels all of you in the number of his (spiritual)children.

Then, once the prophethood and messengership of the Holy Prophet ﷺ was mentioned here in which he carries a very special and distinct excellence over all other prophets, this distinctive eminence surpassing all other prophets has been indicated by the following words: وَخَاتَمَ النَّبِيّٖنَ (and the Last of the Prophets).

There are two ways to read the word خاتم Imām Ḥasan رحمہ اللہ تعالیٰ and 'Aṣim read this word as *khatam* whereas other leading scholars read it as *khatim*. The meaning remains the same in both cases, that is, 'the last of the prophets'. In both the cases, the word means the 'last' as well as the 'seal'. The meaning of the seal is also the 'last' because the seal is applied to something when it is intended to be closed. The Holy Prophet ﷺ has been called the seal of the prophets because the process of sending new prophets has come to an end on his advent. This is the gist of the explanation given in Tafsīr Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī, Tafsīr of Al-Baydawī and Aḥmadi. The fact that both the words '*khatam*' and '*khatim*' carry the same meaning in this sentence has been affirmed by all the famous lexicons of the Arabic language.

Ibn Sidah, for example, in his Almuḥkam states that the the words *'khatim'* and *'khatimah'* with regard to everything means its end and its termination.

The gist is that both readings of the verse (*khatam* and *khatim*) convey the same meaning, that is, the Holy Prophet ﷺ has concluded the line of prophets; he has succeeded all the prophets and he is the last among all of them.

The Holy Prophet's ﷺ attribute of being the last of all the prophets demonstrates his excellence and distinction in all the perfections of prophethood and messengership, because in general, all things progress gradually reaching completion at the highest stage, and the end result is the real objective. The Holy Qur'ān has stated this clearly in اَلْيَوْمَ اَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِيْنَكُمْ وَاَتْمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِيْ (Today, I have perfected your religion for you and have completed My blessings upon you. - 15:3).

The religions of the previous prophets were also complete with regard to their respective times - none was defective. But absolute perfection was reached by the religion of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad al-Muṣṭafa ﷺ which is the authority for all the ancient and modern human beings and will continue to be so up to the Doomsday.

By adding the phrase 'last of the prophets' after negating his being a father of a male boy, another point has been clarified here. The polytheists used to pass negative remarks against the Holy Prophet ﷺ by saying that he has no son, and therefore his lineage would not continue. By saying that he is the last of the prophets it is indicated that these remarks are based on ignorance, because he is the spiritual father of the whole Ummah which follows him and being the last prophet, all the races and nations to come in this world till the Doomsday would be included in his Ummah; as such the number of persons in his Ummah would be more than in other Ummah and his spiritual sons would be more than those of other prophets.

The Holy Prophet's ﷺ being the last prophet has also told us that his kindness and affection for his spiritual sons (i.e. for his Ummah) would be more than that of other prophets and he would be fully seized of the concern to identify and appreciate the needs which may arise till Doomsday because no prophet or wahy (Divine revelation) would come

after him. The prophets preceding him did not have this concern because they knew that when the nation would deviate and adopt erring ways, other prophets would come after them and reform the nation. But the Last Prophet ﷺ was seized of the concern that he should impart instructions to the Ummah for all the situations that it may face uptill Doomsday. The *aḥādīth* of the Holy Prophet ﷺ bear witness to the above, because he has told us even the names of most of those people who could be followed and who would come after him. Similarly, he has told us the details about the leaders who would misguide humanity in a manner that anybody who cares to ponder over those warnings would not have the slightest doubt left in his mind. That is why the Holy Prophet ﷺ said إِنِّی تَرَكْتُكُمْ عَلٰى شَرِيْعَةٍ بَيْضَآءَ لَيْلُهَا وَنَهَارُهَا سَوَاءٌ "I have left (you) on such an illuminated path where it does not make any difference whether it is day or night; there is no danger of being misguided at any time."

Another point to note in this verse is that Sayyidnā Muḥammad al-Muṣṭafa ﷺ has been referred to in the beginning of the sentence as a rasul (messenger) and as such it would have been apparently more appropriate to use the word *khatam-ur-rusul* or *khatam-ul-mursalīn* (the last of the messengers) for him. But the wise Qur'ān has, instead, used the word *khatam-un-nabiyyin* (the last of the prophets). The reason is that according to the consensus of scholars, there is a difference between Nabī (prophet) and rasul (messenger). Nabī is that person whom Allah Ta'ālā (the Almighty) has selected for the reformation of His slaves and has honored him with His *Waḥy* (revelation), irrespective of whether He has given him a Book and a new Sharī'ah (set of revealed rules and precepts) or He has appointed him to guide the followers of a previous Nabī according to a previous Nabī's Book and Sharī'ah, like Sayyidnā Hārūn عليه السلام was appointed to guide and reform his followers according to the Book and Sharī'ah of Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام. On the contrary, the word rasul (messenger) is used exclusively for a particular Nabī who has been given a Book and a new Sharī'ah. As such Nabī is more general than Rasūl.

So the meaning of this verse is that the Holy Prophet ﷺ, being the last of the prophets, has concluded the line of prophets and no prophet will come after him, irrespective of whether he is given a Book and a Sharī'ah or he succeeds a previous Nabī to follow his Book and Sharī'ah.

It is now very clear that all kinds of prophets appointed by Allah came to an end with the Holy Prophet ﷺ; no prophet will be appointed after him.

Imām Ibn Kathīr, in his Tafsīr, says:

فَهٰذِهِ الْاٰيَةُ فِیْ اَنَّه' لَا نَبِیَّ بَعْدَه' وَاِذَا كَانَ لَا نَبِیَّ بَعْدَهٗ فَلَا رَسُوْلَ بِالطَّرِیْقِ الْاَوْلٰی، لِاَنَّ مَقَامَ الرِّسَالَةِ اَخَصُّ مِنْ مَّقَامِ النُّبُوَّةِ، فَاِنَّ كُلَّ رَسُوْلٍ نَبِیٌّ وَّلَا یَنْعَكِسُ، بِذٰلِكَ وَرَدَتِ الْاَحَادِیْثُ الْمُتَوَاتِرَةُ عَنْ رَّسُوْلِ اللّٰهِ صَلَّی اللّٰهُ عَلَیْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مِنْ حَدِیْثِ جَمَاعَةٍ مِّنَ الصَّحَابَةِ.

"This verse is the unambiguous proof of the belief that there would be no Nabī after the Holy Prophet ﷺ and since there would be no Nabī , there is no question of there being any rasul after him because Nabī is a general term and rasul is particular. And this is the belief which is evidenced by mutawatir *aḥādīth* which have reached us through the reports of a very large number of the Noble Companions ﷺ."

The Literal explanation of this verse has been given here in considerable detail because one imposter by the name of Mirzā Qadiyānī, considering this verse to be a hindrance in his way, has distorted the meanings of the verse and has introduced a host of conjectures in its explanation. The foregoing, al-Hamdulillah, is a befitting reply.

The Issue of Termination of Prophethood

That the Holy Prophet ﷺ was the last of the prophets who has sealed and thus terminated prophethood, and that no other prophet is to be appointed after him and every claimant to prophethood is a liar and an infidel are well-settled issues on which there has been complete unanimity and consensus right from the days of the noble companions ﷺ upto the date. Therefore there was no need for a lengthy discussion on this subject. But the Qadiyānī sect has put in a lot of effort to create doubts in the minds of Muslims on this issue; by publishing hundreds of pamphlets and books they have tried to misguide those Muslims who are not well versed in religious knowledge. So this humble author has written a book titled "*Khatm-e-Nabuwwat*" in which this issue has been fully detailed and clarified in the light of one hundred Qur'ānic verses, more than two hundred *aḥādīth* and hundreds of dictum of the classic as well as later scholars and learned people; the Qadiyānī deception and doubts created

thereby have been fully refuted. Some important points from that book are being reproduced here.

The Holy Prophet's ﷺ Being the Last Prophet does not negate the descent of Sayyidnā 'Īsā عليه السلام in the last days

It is proved from many verses of the Qur'ān and from *mutawatir aḥādīth* that in the last days before the doomsday, Sayyidnā 'Īsā عليه السلام would come into this world again, kill Dajjal (the Antichrist) and bring all misguidance to an end. The detailed proofs of this fact are given in my Arabic book *'At-tasrih'*. Mirzā Qadiyānī, denying the descent of Sayyidnā 'Īsā عليه السلام, has proclaimed himself to be the predicted Masiḥ with the reasoning that if reappearance of Sayyidnā 'Īsā Ibn Maryam عليها السلام who was a prophet of Israelites, is accepted, then it would negate the Holy Prophet's ﷺ being the last of the prophets.

The clear reply is that the Holy Prophet's ﷺ being the last prophet means that nobody would be appointed as a prophet after him; it does not imply that somebody who was appointed a prophet earlier would be dismissed from his prophethood or that such a prophet would not be able to return to this world. But, of course, the prophet who returns to this world for the reformation of the Ummah of the Holy Prophet ﷺ while maintaining his prophethood, would carry out the reforms in the *Ummah* in accordance with the teachings of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, as clarified in authentic *aḥādīth*.

Imām Ibn Kathir, in explanation of this verse, has said:

والمراد بكونه عليه السّلام خاتمهم انقطاع حدوث وصف النبوّة فى احد مّن الثقلين بعد تحليته عليه السلام بها فى هٰذه النشأة، ولا يَقدح فى ذٰلِك ما اجمت عليه الامّة واشتهرت فيه الاخبار، ولعلها بلغت مبلغ التواتر المعنوى و نطق به الكتٰب على قول ووجب الايمان به وأُكفر منكره كالفلاسفة من نزول عيسى عليه السلام آخرالزمان، لانّه كان نبيًّا قبل ان يحلى نبيّنا صلى اللّٰه عليه وسلم بالنبوة فى هٰذه النشأة.

"The Holy Prophet ﷺ being the last of the prophets means that the office of prophethood stands terminated after him. No one would get this office after him. But it does not have any effect on the fact of the descent and reappearance of Sayyidnā 'Īsā عليه السلام in the last days on which there is a consensus of the whole *Ummah* and which is proved by a large number of *aḥādīth* that

are almost mutawatir and by the Qur'ān itself according to some interpretations, because he had been given prophethood before the Holy Prophet ﷺ."

Distortion of the Meaning of Prophethood and invention of new kinds of Prophethood

This claimant of prophethood adopted a new trick to pave the way for his claim by inventing a new kind of prophethood which simply does not exist in Qur'ān and Sunnah and neither is there any proof for it, but according to him this new kind of prophethood does not negate the decree of Qur'ān regarding the termination of prophethood. Briefly, he has introduced in prophethood the concept of reincarnation, which is well known in Hinduism and other religions. His contention is that if a person is dyed in the color of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, by virtue of his complete obedience to him and by following his footsteps, his coming to this world is the coming of the Holy Prophet ﷺ himself; such a person is in fact the shadow and incarnate demonstration of none else but the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Therefore, his claim does not negate the belief in the termination of prophethood after him.

But how can this invented kind of prophethood find its way to Islamic beliefs? There is no proof of it. Besides, the belief in termination of prophethood is a basic belief of Islam and as such it has been so thoroughly clarified by the Holy Prophet ﷺ under different topics at various times that no imposter can distort it. The full details can be seen in this author's book referred to earlier, but only some necessary proofs of this belief are being presented here.

Ṣaḥīḥ of Bukhārī, Ṣaḥīḥ of Muslim and almost all books of Ḥadīth have reported from Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah رضي الله عنه with authentic chain of narrators that the Holy Prophet ﷺ has said,

ان مثلی ومثل الانبیآء من قبلی کمثل رجل بنی بیتًا فاحسنه واجمله الاموضع لبنة من زاویة، فجعل الناس یطوفون به ویعجبون له ویقولون هلاّ: وضعت هذه اللبنة؟ وانا خاتم النبیین، رواه احمد والنسائی والترمذی وفی بعض الفاظه فکنت انا سددت موضع اللبنة وختم بی البنیان

"The example of all the prophets before me and of myself is like a man has built a very strong and well decorated house in one corner wall of which space has been left vacant for one brick; people roam about in the home to see it and admire the

construction but all of them say that why did not the builder put a brick in that space also which would have completed the construction. I am that last brick (of the palace of prophethood)" and in some versions he said "I have filled up that vacant space and thus completed the palace of prophethood."

The gist of this eloquent simile is that prophethood is like a grand palace composed of Prophets ﷺ. This grand palace was complete in all respects before the Holy Prophet ﷺ except for the placement of one brick. The Holy Prophet ﷺ completed this grand palace by filling up that vacant space for one brick. Now there is no more space for any prophet or messenger. Even if it is supposed that there are other kinds of prophets and messengers, there is just no more space for them in the palace of prophethood.

In another Ḥadīth narrated by Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ؓ reported in Ṣaḥīḥs of Bukhārī, Muslim, Musnad of Aḥmad, etc., the Holy Prophet ﷺ has said:

كانت بنو اسرائيل تسوسهم الانبياء كلّما هلک نبی خلفه نبی وانه لانبی بعدی و سیکون خلفاء فیکثرون (الحدیث)

"The politics and administration of Banu Isrā'īl was being handled by the prophets themselves. When one prophet expired, another prophet would take his place. And after me there is no prophet, but of course, there would be my khulafā' (caliphs - successors) who would be numerous."

This Ḥadīth has made it clear that there would be no prophet after the Holy Prophet ﷺ and the education and instruction of the Ummah would be carried out by his Khulafā'. The Holy Prophet ﷺ has explicitly and clearly told us that there is no prophethood of any kind after him, otherwise he would have mentioned it in this Ḥadīth where he has mentioned Khulafā'.

Ṣaḥīḥs of Bukhārī and Muslim have reported a Ḥadīth narrated by Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ؓ :-

لَمْ يَبْقَ مِنَ النُّبُوَّةِ اِلاَّ الْمُبَشِّرَات

"Nothing is left of prophethood except *mubashshirat* (true dreams)".

As reported in Musnad of Aḥmad, etc., Sayyidah Ṣiddiqah 'Ā'ishah

رضی اللہ عنہا and Sayyidah Umm Kurz al- K'abiyyah رضی اللہ عنہا have stated that the Holy Prophet ﷺ has said:

لایبقی بعدی من النبوة شیٔ الّا المبشرات، قالوا: یا رسول اللّٰه! وما المبشرات؟
قال: الرؤیا الصّالحة یراها المسلم او تری له. (طبرانی، کذا فی الکنز)

"Nothing is left of prophethood after me except mubashshirat. The noble companions ؓ asked: O Holy Prophet ﷺ! What is *mubashshirat*? He replied, 'True dreams that a Muslim sees himself or somebody else sees about him."

This Ḥadīth has so explicitly told that no kind of prophethood, either one with a new law or without it, either *Ẓilli* (shadowy) or *Buruzi* (incarnate), is possible after the Holy Prophet ﷺ; people would only have *mubashshirat* (true dreams) through which they would find out a few things.

Musnad of Aḥmad and Tirmidhī carry a narration of Sayyidnā Anas Ibn Mālik ؓ wherein the Holy Prophet ﷺ has said:

إن الرسالة والنبوة قد انقطعت فلا رسول بعدی ولا نبی (رواه الترمذی وقال: هذا حدیث صحیح)

"No doubt *risalah* (messengership) and nubuwwah (prophethood) stand terminated after me; after me there would neither be a *rasūl* (messenger) nor a Nabī (prophet)".

This Ḥadīth has made it clear that prophethood even without a new law is simply not there after the Holy Prophet ﷺ what to say of *zilli* or *buruzi* prophethood which are neither any form of prophethood nor are they recognized as such in Islam.

The objective is not to collect here all the *aḥādīth* pertaining to the issue of termination of prophethood; more than two hundred *aḥādīth* on this subject have been put together in my book "Khatm-e-Nabuwwat". The objective, by quoting a few of them is to advise that the categories of *ẓilli* and *buruzi* prophethood invented by Mirzā Qadiyānī is without any basis or proof, and moreover the *aḥādīth* quoted above have told explicitly that there is no kind of of prophethood whatsoever left to come after the Holy Prophet ﷺ.

That is why, right from the days of the noble companions ؓ uptill today, all the schools of Muslim *Ummah* are unanimous on the belief that there cannot be any kind of Nabī or Rasūl after the Holy Prophet ﷺ and

whoever claims to be so is a liar and denier of the Qur'ān and is a disbeliever. The first general consensus of the noble companions ﷺ had evolved on this very issue as a result of which a holy war (*jihād*) was fought with Musaylimah, the liar, the false claimant of prophethood, during the period of the first Khalīfah Sayyidnā Abū Bakr ﷺ, in which he (Musailimah) and his followers were killed.

The dictums and clarifications of the past Imāms and wise scholars of the *Ummah* are reproduced in considerable detail in the book "Khatm-e-Nabuwwat", some of them are being copied here also.

Ibn Kathir, in his tafsir, writes under this verse:

اخبر اللّٰه تعالیٰ فی کتابه و رسوله اللّٰه صلی اللّٰه علیه وسلّم فی السنة المتواترة عنه أنه لا نبی بعده لیعلموا ان کل من ادعی هذا المقام بعده فهو کذاب افّاک دجّال ضالّ مضل. ولوتحرّق وشعبذ واتی بانواع السحر والطلاسم والنیرنجیات فکلها محال وضلال عند اولی الالباب کما اجری اللّٰه سُبحانه علی ید الاسود العنسی بالیمن ومسیلمة الکذاب بالیمامة من الاحوال الفاسدة والاقوال الباردة ما علم کُلّ ذی لُبّ وفهم وحجی انهما کاذبان ضالّان لعنهما اللّٰه تعالیٰ وکذلک کل مدع لذٰلک الی یوم القیٰمة حتّٰی یختموا بالمسیح الدجّال. (ابن کثیر)

"Allah Ta'ālā in this Book and the Holy Prophet ﷺ in successive *aḥādīth* has informed that there is no Nabī after the Holy Prophet ﷺ so that people should know that whoever claims to be a prophet after him is a liar, a cheat, an imposter, a deviator who misguides others, no matter how many conjuring tricks he shows, magic spells he binds or talismanic wonders and sorceries he performs which are, in fact, sheer fallacies recognized as such by the people who have have knowledge and understanding. Allah Ta'ālā had let such perverse acts and utterances manifested at the hands of Aswad Al-'Ansi (claimant of prophethood) in Yemen and Musaylimah, the liar, (another claimant of prophethood) in Yamamah in a way that every intelligent and comprehending person, after hearing and seeing them, knew that both of them were liars and misguided. May Allah curse them. In the same way anyone who claims to be a prophet upto the Doomsday is a liar and an infidel and this stream of claimants of prophethood would end at Dajjal, the Anti-Christ."

Imām Ghazzali, ,while explaining the above mentioned verse and

discussing the belief in the termination of prophethood, has observed in his book *'Al-Iqtiṣād fil I'tiqād'* as follows,

> وليس فيه تاويل ولا تخصيص ومن اوّله بتخصيص فكلامه من الهذيان لايمنع الحكم بتكفيره لانّه مكذّبٌ لهذا النص الذى اجمعت الامة على انه غير مأوّل ولا مخصوص .
>
> "The entire Ummah has unanimously understood from these words and from circumstantial evidences that there will never be a prophet after him ever, nor will ever come a messenger of Allah. These words (of the verse) can neither be interpreted in any other sense, nor can their generality be restricted."

Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ in his book 'Ash-shifa', after declaring that a person who claims to prophethood after the Holy Prophet ﷺ is a liar and an infidel who does not believe in this verse, has observed as follows:

> واجمعت الامة على حمل هذا الكلام على ظاهره، وانّ مفهومه المراد به دون تاويل ولا تخصيص، فلا شك فى كفر هؤلاء الطوائف كلها قطعًا اجماعًا وسمعًا.
>
> "The Ummah holds by consensus that this discourse bears the obvious meaning and that this verse means what it says, without any other interpretation or any exception. Therefore, there is no doubt in the *kufr* (infidelity) of all those sects (who follow any claim out of prophethood) rather their *kufr* stands absolutely proved in view of the consensus of the *Ummah* and the express texts of the Qur'ān and Sunnah.

Verses 41 - 48

يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوا اذْكُرُوا اللّٰهَ ذِكْرًا كَثِيْرًا ﴿٤١﴾ وَّسَبِّحُوْهُ بُكْرَةً
وَّاَصِيْلاً ﴿٤٢﴾ هُوَ الَّذِىْ يُصَلِّىْ عَلَيْكُمْ وَمَلٰٓئِكَتُهٗ لِيُخْرِجَكُمْ مِّنَ
الظُّلُمٰتِ اِلَى النُّوْرِ ط وَكَانَ بِالْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ رَحِيْمًا ﴿٤٣﴾ تَحِيَّتُهُمْ يَوْمَ
يَلْقَوْنَهٗ سَلٰمٌ صلے وَاَعَدَّ لَهُمْ اَجْرًا كَرِيْمًا ﴿٤٤﴾ يٰٓاَيُّهَا النَّبِىُّ اِنَّآ
اَرْسَلْنٰكَ شَاهِدًا وَّمُبَشِّرًا وَّنَذِيْرًا ﴿٤٥﴾ وَّدَاعِيًا اِلَى اللّٰهِ بِاِذْنِهٖ
وَسِرَاجًا مُّنِيْرًا ﴿٤٦﴾ وَبَشِّرِ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ بِاَنَّ لَهُمْ مِّنَ اللّٰهِ فَضْلاً كَبِيْرًا
﴿٤٧﴾ وَلَا تُطِعِ الْكٰفِرِيْنَ وَالْمُنٰفِقِيْنَ وَدَعْ اَذٰىهُمْ وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللّٰهِ ط

وَكَفٰى بِاللّٰهِ وَكِيلًا ﴿٤٨﴾

O those who believe, remember Allah abundantly, [41] **and proclaim His purity at morn and eve.** [42] **He is such that He and His angels send blessings to you, so that He brings you out from all sorts of darkness into Light. And He is Very-Merciful to the believers.** [43] **Their greeting, the Day they will meet Him, will be, "Salām" (Peace). And He has prepared for them a noble reward.** [44]

O prophet, We have sent you as a witness and a bearer of good news and a warner, [45] **and as one who calls (people) towards Allah with His permission, and as a luminous lamp.** [46] **And give good news to the believers that they are to receive a huge bounty from Allah.** [47] **And do not obey the infidels and the hypocrites, and just ignore any hurt (that afflicts you) from them, and place your trust in Allah. And Allah is sufficient (for you) to take care of all matters.** [48]

Commentary

Mentioned in the preceding verse was the incident of Sayyidnā Zaid ﷺ and Sayyidah Zainab رضی اللہ عنہا, and in relation to it the Holy Prophet's being the last of the prophets has been stated in the context of directions for the respect and reverence of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and saving oneself from causing any pain to him.

Further on also, the perfect attributes of the Holy Prophet ﷺ are going to be stated; his person and attributes are the greatest blessings for Muslims in this world. The instruction of remembering Allah in abundance is given in the above verse to show gratitude for those blessings.

Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ has stated that there is no form of worship except ذکر اللہ *dhikrullah* (remembrance of Allah) for which Allah has not fixed a limit; for example, Ṣalāh is prescribed five times a day and the number of *rak'at* are determined for each Ṣalāh; fasting throughout the month of Ramadan is determined, Ḥajj can be performed only at a particular place and at a particular time, Zakāh is prescribed once a year at a particular rate. But *dhikrullah* is a form of worship for which there is no limit or defined quantity, no particular time or period, no defined

posture or position, nor even the state of purity through ablution is required. Dhikrullah is required all the time, in all circumstances, whether one is traveling or is at home, whether one is healthy or ill, whether one is on land or at sea, whether it is day or night - *dhikrullah* is required all the time.

Therefore no excuse is acceptable for neglecting *dhikrullah* except that one may have lost his senses and become unconscious. In case of all forms of worship, other than *dhikrullah,* if one becomes unable due to illness or compelling circumstances, one is allowed reduction, brevity or exemption altogether, but in case of *dhikrullah* there are no extenuating circumstances. Therefore, no excuse is considered valid for omitting it and the merits, blessings and rewards for doing it are also numerous.

Imām Aḥmad has reported from Sayyidnā Abū ad-Darda' ﵁ that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said to the noble companions ﵃, 'Should I not tell you a thing that is better than all your deeds and is most acceptable to your Lord, and which would raise your grades, and is better than giving silver and gold in charity and alms and is also better than your embarking for Jihad wherein you face and kill the enemy and the enemy kills you? The noble companions ﵃ asked the Holy Prophet ﷺ about that thing. The Holy Prophet ﷺ said, ذِكْرُ اللّٰهِ عَزَّوَجَلَّ that is, remembrance of Allah, the Mightiest the Most Glorious". (Ibn Kathīr)

Imām Aḥmad and Tirmidhī also have reported that Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ﵁ said that he had heard a prayer from the Holy Prophet ﷺ which he does never miss. It is the following:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اجْعَلْنِیْ اُعَظِّمُ شُکْرَکَ وَاَتَّبِعُ نَصِیْحَتَکَ وَاُکْثِرُ ذِکْرَکَ وَاَحْفَظُ وَصِیَّتَکَ

"O Allah make me so that I keep thanking You profusely, I keep obeying your instructions, I keep remembering You abundantly and I safeguard (to follow) your advice." (Ibn Kathīr)

Here the Holy Prophet ﷺ has supplicated to Allah Ta'ālā for ability to engage in dhikrullah abundantly.

A Beduin said to the Holy Prophet ﷺ that the number of good deeds, obligations in Islam are many; so please tell me something concise and comprehensive which I could hold on to firmly. The Holy Prophet ﷺ told him,

لَا يَزَالُ لِسَانُكَ رَطْبًا بِذِكْرِ اللّٰهِ تَعَالٰى

That your tongue remains always wet with the *dhikr* of Allah. (Musnad Aḥmad, Ibn Kathīr)

Sayyidnā Abū Sa'īd ﷺ has narrated that the Holy Prophet ﷺ has said اُذْكُرُوا اللّٰهَ تَعَالٰى حَتّٰى يَقُوْلُوا مَجْنُوْنٌ "Remember Allah, the Almighty so much so that people start calling you crazy." (Ibn Kathīr from Musnad Aḥmad)

And Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Umar ﷺ has narrated that the Holy Prophet ﷺ has said that a gathering of people wherein Allah is not mentioned would prove to be a matter of remorse on the Doomsday for those sitting therein. (Aḥmad, Ibn Kathīr)

وَسَبِّحُوْهُ بُكْرَةً وَّاَصِيْلًا ("And proclaim His purity at morn and eve". 33:42) Here morning and evening may, metaphorically, mean all the time. Alternatively, morning and evening have been mentioned specifically to lay emphasis on carrying out *dhikrullah* during these times and to indicate that it carries more blessings - otherwise dhikrullah is neither specified nor limited to any particular time.

هُوَ الَّذِىْ يُصَلِّىْ عَلَيْكُمْ وَمَلٰٓئِكَتُهٗ (He is such that He and His angels send blessings to you. 33:43) It means that when you have become used to *dhikrullah* in abundance and have become regular in recounting the perfections of Allah morning and evening, Allah would honor you and respect you by bestowing His Blessings and by the angels supplicating for you.

The word 'Ṣalāh' has been used in this verse for Allah Ta'ālā as well as for the angels but the applicable meaning are different. For Allah it means His bestowing blessings, and for angels who have no volition on their own, it means their supplication to Allah to bestow His blessings.

Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ has stated that Ṣalāh from Allah is blessing, from angels it is prayer for forgiveness and from humans it is supplication. The word Ṣalāh carries all the three meanings.

تَحِيَّتُهُمْ يَوْمَ يَلْقَوْنَهٗ سَلٰمٌ (Their greeting, the Day they will meet Him, will be, "Salām" - 33:44). This is the explanation of the Ṣalāh that is sent to believers from Allah. It means that the day they would meet Allah, they will be respectfully addressed by Him with the word, 'Salām' i.e. (Assalamu 'alaykum) . The day of meeting Allah according to Imām

Rāghib, would be the Doomsday; some other leading exegetes say that it would be when they enter Paradise and they would receive Salām from Allah Ta'ālā as well as from the angels; and yet other scholars consider it to be the day of death when they would leave the whole world to be present before Allah as stated by Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd رضي الله عنه that when the Angel of Death goes to a believer to extract the spirit of life out of him, he gives him a message that his Lord has sent to him Salām. The word 'meeting' is true in all the three cases. Therefore there can be no objection or contradiction in the traditions, because Salām from Allah Ta'ālā is sent on all the three occasions.

Note

This verse has proved that when Muslims meet each other, their greeting should be *assalamu 'alaykum* whether from the older to the younger or from the younger to the older.

Special Attributes of the Holy Prophet ﷺ

يٰاَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ اِنَّآ اَرْسَلْنٰكَ شَاهِدًا وَّمُبَشِّرًا وَّنَذِيْرًا وَّدَاعِيًا اِلَى اللّٰهِ بِاِذْنِهٖ وَسِرَاجًا مُّنِيْرًا

> O prophet, We have sent you as a witness and a bearer of good news and a warner and as one who calls (people) towards Allah with His permission, and as a luminous lamp. (33:45-46)

The text here reverts to the special perfect attributes of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Five attributes have been mentioned here - 'Shāhīd', *'mubashshir', "nadhir', da'i ila Allah'. 'sirāj munīr'*. 'Shāhīd' (a witness) means that the Holy Prophet ﷺ will be a witness of the *ummah* on the Day of Judgment according to a *ḥadīth* narrated by Sayyidnā Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī رضي الله عنه and reported by Bukhārī, Nasa'ī and Tirmidhī. It is mentioned in some parts of that Ḥadīth that on the Day of Judgment when Sayyidnā Nūḥ عليه السلام will be presented before Allah, he will be asked whether he had conveyed Allah's Message to his Ummah. He will reply that he did. Then his Ummah will be presented and they will deny having received any message of Allah. Then Sayyidnā Nūḥ عليه السلام will be asked whether he has any witness to his claim of having conveyed the message of truth, and he will reply that Muḥammad ﷺ and his Ummah are witnesses. Some narrations have it that he will present the Ummah of Muḥammad ﷺ as witness and this Ummah will give evidence in his favour. At this, the Ummah of Sayyidnā Nūḥ عليه السلام will argue 'How can they, who were not even born at that time, give evidence in our case?'.

Now the Ummah of Muḥammad ﷺ will be asked to substantiate their evidence and they will answer that no doubt they were not born at that time but they were told about it by their Holy Prophet ﷺ in whom they believe and trust. At this time the Holy Prophet ﷺ will be asked to give testimony regarding the veracity of his Ummah's statement.

Briefly, the Holy Prophet ﷺ through his testimony, will confirm and verify the statement of his Ummah that, of course, he had given them that news.

Another general meaning of being a witness for the Ummah may be that the Holy Prophet ﷺ will give evidence about the good and bad deeds of all the individuals of his Ummah. And this evidence would be on the basis that the deeds of the Ummah are presented before the Holy Prophet ﷺ every morning and evening daily; some narrations state that the deeds are presented once a week. The Holy Prophet ﷺ thus recognizes each and every individual of his Ummah by their deeds and as such he will be made witness for the Ummah on the Doomsday. (Ibn al-Mubarak from Sa'id Ibn al- Musayyab, Maẓharī)

'Mubashshshir' means bearer of good news, and as such the Holy Prophet ﷺ is the announcer of the good news of Paradise for the righteous people of his *Ummah.*

'Nadhir' means the one who warns; thus the Holy Prophet ﷺ also puts the fear of Allah's punishment in the hearts of his Ummah in case they violate or disobey the injunctions of Sharī'ah.

'One who calls people to Allah' means that the Holy Prophet ﷺ calls his Ummah to believe in Allah's Being, Oneness and obedience. The act of calling towards Allah has been qualified by the phrase 'with His permission'. It means that the Holy Prophet ﷺ calls and invites people towards Allah with His permission. This condition is an indication that preaching and inviting towards Allah are very difficult tasks which cannot be performed successfully without Allah" permission and help.

سِرَاجٌ (Sirāj) means lamp and مُنِيرٌ ('Munīr') means luminous. The fifth attribute of the Holy Prophet ﷺ has been stated that he is a luminous lamp, and some are of the view that 'luminous lamp' refers here to the Qur'ān. But the context suggests that this is also an attribute of the Holy Prophet ﷺ.

Qāḍī Thana'ullāh has stated in Tafsīr Maẓharī that "the Holy Prophet's ﷺ function of calling towards Allah pertains to his speech and outward acts, his attribute of being a 'luminous lamp' pertains to his blessed heart. Just as the sun illuminates the whole world, in the same way, the hearts of the faithful become illuminated by the radiant light of his heart. That is why the noble companions who were the beneficiaries of his company in this world are superior and more exalted than the whole of the Ummah, because their hearts were illuminated and graced by his heart directly; the rest of the Ummah received this radiant light indirectly through the noble companions and their successors and so on."

It can also be said that all prophets, specially the Holy Prophet ﷺ, after having passed away from this world are alive in their graves. Their life in *barzakh* (transition between death and the Day of Resurrection) is much more superior than the transit-life of common people, the reality of which is known to Allah Ta'ālā only. However due to this life, the hearts of all Muslims would keep on receiving the radiant light of his blessed heart, and the share of each individual would be in accordance with the intensity of love and reverence he has towards the Holy Prophet ﷺ and the abundance of Ṣalāh (*durud*) he offers to him.

The radiant light of the Holy Prophet ﷺ has been metaphorically described as a 'lamp', even though his inner radiance is far brighter than the sun. This is because the sun illuminates only the surface of the world, whereas his blessed heart illuminates the inside of the whole world and the hearts of the faithful. The reason for this simile appears to be that obtaining advantage from the light of a lamp is voluntary and available all the time easily, whereas approaching the sun is well-nigh impossible and its light is not available all the time.

The attributes of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, as stated in the Holy Qur'ān, are also mentioned in Torah as reported by Imām Bukhārī that Sayyidnā 'Ata' Ibn Yasar says that one day when I met Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Amr Ibn al-'As رضي الله عنه asked him to tell me the attributes of the Holy Prophet ﷺ as stated in Torah. He said, "of course, I will tell you. By Allah! some of the attributes of the Holy Prophet ﷺ mentioned in the Qur'ān are also there in Torah" And then he quoted the following extract.

إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنٰكَ شَاهِدًا وَّمُبَشِّرًا وَّنَذِيرًا وَّحِرْزًا لِّلْأُمِّيِّينَ، أَنْتَ عَبْدِي وَرَسُولِي سَمَّيْتُكَ

الْمُتَوَكِّلَ، لَيْسَ بِفَظٍّ وَّلاَ غَلِيْظٍ وَّلاَ سَخَّابٍ فِى الْاَسْوَاقِ وَلاَ يَدْفَعُ السَّيِّئَةَ بِالسَّيِّئَةِ وَلٰكِنْ يَّعْفُوْ وَيَغْفِرُلَنْ يَّقْبِضَه' اللّٰهُ تَعَالٰى حَتّٰى يُقِيْمَ بِهِ الْمِلَّةَ الْعَوْجَآءَ بِاَنْ يَّقُوْلُوْا لَآ اِلٰهَ اِلاَّ اللّٰهُ وَيَفْتَحُ بِهٖ اعينا عُمْيًا وَّاٰذَانًا صُمًّا وَّقُلُوْبًا غُلْفًا.

"O Prophet ﷺ! We have sent you as a witness, as a bearer of glad tidings , as a warner and as a refuge and protection for the illiterate Arabs. You are My slave and messenger. I have named you *"mutawakkil'* (i.e. one who trusts in Allah). You are neither ill-tempered nor hard natured nor one who raises noise in the markets; you do not repay wickedness with wickedness, rather you forbear and forgive. Allah Ta'ālā would not recall you from the world till He has straightened out the crooked Ummah through you and they start saying *'lā ilaha illallāh'*. Allah would open up unseeing eyes, un-hearing ears and locked-up hearts through you".

The Holy Qur'ān, after attributing the above qualities to the Holy Prophet ﷺ, is asking him to carry on his functions, that is, to give the good news to the faithful that they are going to receive great bounties and mercy from Allah and not to obey the desires of the infidels and hypocrites. It was, though, not possible for the Holy Prophet ﷺ obey the infidels and the hypocrites or to give up preaching and inviting people, yet there was a chance that, in order to avoid people's sarcasm and taunts, he might have inclined to avoid marrying Sayyidah Zainab رضی اللہ عنہا that was, in fact, a practical demonstration of the divine rule of Sharī'ah. This has been alluded to as obeying the infidels and hypocrites. He was further directed not to mind any vexation that he may receive from the infidels and hypocrites (as he did) and also not to worry about physical harm afflicted by them, but in case such a thought crosses his mind, he was directed to trust in Allah, because Allah is enough to put all matters right - He will protect him from all harms, and if an apparent harm is caused during preaching, it is a gain in reality, and is not against the promise of protection and putting things right.

Verse 49

يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْٓا اِذَا نَكَحْتُمُ الْمُؤْمِنٰتِ ثُمَّ طَلَّقْتُمُوْهُنَّ مِنْ قَبْلِ اَنْ تَمَسُّوْهُنَّ فَمَالَكُمْ عَلَيْهِنَّ مِنْ عِدَّةٍ تَعْتَدُّوْنَهَاۚ فَمَتِّعُوْهُنَّ

وَسَرِّحُوهُنَّ سَرَاحًا جَمِيلًا ﴿٤٩﴾

O those who believe, when you marry the believing women then divorce them before you have touched them, then they have no obligation of any '*iddah* (waiting period) for you that you may count. So give them (due) benefits, and release them in a pleasant manner. [49]

Commentary

Some attributes and the special eminence of the Holy Prophet ﷺ have been mentioned in the preceding verse. Some special rules that are exclusive to him in matters of marriage and divorce are intended to be mentioned in forthcoming verses in which he has a distinction over the general Ummah. But before that, a general rule regarding divorce has been mentioned as a prologue which is applicable to all Muslims in general.

There are three injunctions regarding divorce in this verse.

The first injunction is that if after *nikah* (marriage) a woman is divorced before the spouses have had full privacy الخلوة الصحيحة (Al-khalwah Aṣ-ṣaḥīḥah), then she is not liable to any period of '*iddah* (waiting period),which means that she can enter into another marriage immediately. In the present verse, 'touching' means having sexual intercourse, either actually or by presumption, because if the spouses meet together at a private place without any apprehension of interference by someone and there is nothing to prevent them from having sex, this type of privacy (Al-khalwah Aṣ-ṣaḥīḥah) carries the same legal consequences as an actual intercourse.

The second injunction is that the divorced woman should be separated gracefully and by giving some gifts to her. Giving something to a divorced woman at the time of her departure is desirable according to Sunnah, and in some cases it is compulsory as elaborated in verse 236 of Sūrah Al-Baqarah (لَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ إِن طَلَّقْتُمُ النِّسَآءَ مَا لَمْ تَمَسُّوهُنَّ - There is no sin on you if you divorce women when you have not touched them. - 2:236). The use of the word '*mata*' here is perhaps based on the wisdom that this word has a wide and general meaning and is applicable to anything which may be beneficial, which includes the woman's obligatory rights,

like *mahr* (dower), etc.,which means that the dower, if not already paid, has to be paid at the time of divorce gladly; and it also includes her rights that are not compulsory, for example, a set of clothes to be gifted to her at the time of departure, which is *mustaḥab* (commendable) in respect of every divorced woman and the Qur'ān has persuaded the husband for both, the compulsory as well as commendable rights.

A leading scholar of Ḥadīth 'Abd Ibn Ḥumayd has narrated the dictum of Sayyidnā Ḥasan رحمه الله that every divorced woman has to be given something as *mut'ah* whether one has had Al-khalwah Assaḥīḥah (full privacy) with her or not and whether her *mahr* (dower) was fixed or not.

Details of Mut'ah to be given at the time of Divorce

Badai', the famous book of Ḥanafī *fiqh* has mentioned that *mut'ah* of divorce means those clothes which a woman wears necessarily when going out. It includes a pair of trousers, long shirt, *shawl* and a large sheet as covering from head to feet. Clothes can be graded as high quality, medium and ordinary. Muslim jurists have determined that if both the husband and wife belong to wealthy families, the clothes have to be of high quality; if they are both poor, then the clothes should be of ordinary quality, and if one is poor and the other wealthy, then the clothes may be of medium quality.

Islam's matchless teaching in discharging social obligations gracefully

Recognition of rights and a courteous behavior towards others is restricted in common practice to relatives, friends and at the best it is extended to common people. Recognizing and discharging of the rights of opponents and foes and devising rules and regulations for their execution is a distinct feature of Islamic teachings. Although many organizations have been established in our days exclusively for the protection of human rights, and some rules and regulations have also been devised for this purpose. Huge sums of money are collected as donations from all over the world for this objective, but all of them are politically oriented and whenever they do help the suffering people, such help is not available everywhere, nor is it without a motive. It is rather given to fulfill their own political aims. And, supposing, these organizations do start functioning properly to serve the suffering humanity, the most they can do is to help when some area is affected by a devastating storm, epidemic

disease, etc. But who would know about the suffering of individuals and single persons? Who can reach them? Let us look at the matter of divorce which obviously is a result of mutual discord, anger and disharmony which usually results in the relationship which was established on the basis of extreme concord, love and affection changing to the opposite i.e combined emotions of hate enmity and revenge. The above mentioned verse of the Holy Qur'ān and many other similar verses have given such instructions to Muslims to be observed right at the time of divorce that they fully test gracefulness of behavior and courteous discharge of social obligations.The emotions keep on inciting one to take as much revenge as one can from the woman who has inflicted so much pain and agony to him that the relationship had to be terminated. But the noble Qur'ān has bound the common divorced woman to stay during the period of *'iddah* in the house of her husband; it has been made obligatory on the husband not to turn the divorced woman out of his house during the period of *'iddah* and to continue to provide her the usual daily maintenance and upkeep during that period. It has also been made desirable for the husband to give her *mut'ah* i.e. a set of clothes at the time of departure after completion of the period of *'iddah* and to release her with grace and respect. Only those women are exempt from the period of *'iddah* who have only gone through *nikah* without stepping into the husband's house, without having had true privacy, but more stress has been laid on offering *mut'ah* to them as compared to other women.

The third injunction is: (سَرِّحُوْهُنَّ سَرَاحًا جَمِيْلًا) "Release them gracefully" which has imposed a restriction on the husband not to say anything harsh even verbally nor to indulge in taunts or sarcasms.

Only that person can honor the rights of the opponents during confrontation who can control his emotions and passions. All the teachings of Islam have laid due emphasis on this principle.

Verses 50 - 52

يٰۤاَيُّهَا النَّبِىُّ اِنَّاۤ اَحْلَلْنَا لَكَ اَزْوَاجَكَ الّٰتِىْۤ اٰتَيْتَ اُجُوْرَهُنَّ وَمَا
مَلَكَتْ يَمِيْنُكَ مِمَّاۤ اَفَآءَ اللّٰهُ عَلَيْكَ وَبَنٰتِ عَمِّكَ وَبَنٰتِ عَمّٰتِكَ
وَبَنٰتِ خَالِكَ وَبَنٰتِ خٰلٰتِكَ الّٰتِىْ هَاجَرْنَ مَعَكَ ۫ وَامْرَاَةً مُّؤْمِنَةً اِنْ

وَّهَبَتْ نَفْسَهَا لِلنَّبِيِّ إِنْ أَرَادَ النَّبِيُّ أَنْ يَّسْتَنْكِحَهَا ق خَالِصَةً لَّكَ مِنْ
دُوْنِ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ط قَدْ عَلِمْنَا مَا فَرَضْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ فِيْٓ أَزْوَاجِهِمْ وَمَا
مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُهُمْ لِكَيْلَا يَكُوْنَ عَلَيْكَ حَرَجٌ ط وَكَانَ اللّٰهُ غَفُوْرًا
رَّحِيْمًا ﴿٥٠﴾ تُرْجِيْ مَنْ تَشَآءُ مِنْهُنَّ وَتُئْوِيْٓ إِلَيْكَ مَنْ تَشَآءُ ط وَمَنِ
ابْتَغَيْتَ مِمَّنْ عَزَلْتَ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكَ ط ذٰلِكَ أَدْنٰٓى أَنْ تَقَرَّ أَعْيُنُهُنَّ
وَلَا يَحْزَنَّ وَيَرْضَيْنَ بِمَآ اٰتَيْتَهُنَّ كُلُّهُنَّ ط وَاللّٰهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِيْ قُلُوْبِكُمْ ط
وَكَانَ اللّٰهُ عَلِيْمًا حَلِيْمًا ﴿٥١﴾ لَا يَحِلُّ لَكَ النِّسَآءُ مِنْ بَعْدُ وَلَآ أَنْ
تَبَدَّلَ بِهِنَّ مِنْ أَزْوَاجٍ وَّلَوْ أَعْجَبَكَ حُسْنُهُنَّ إِلَّا مَا مَلَكَتْ يَمِيْنُكَ ط
وَكَانَ اللّٰهُ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ رَّقِيْبًا ﴿٥٢﴾ ع

O prophet, We have made lawful for you all your wives whom you have given their dowers, And those (bondwomen) whom you own, out of the captives Allah has given to you as spoils of war, and daughters of your paternal uncle, and daughters of your paternal aunts, and daughters of your maternal uncle, and daughters of your maternal aunts, who have migrated with you, and a believing woman who offers herself for (marrying) the prophet without dower, if the prophet wishes to bring her into his marriage, these rules being exclusive for you, and not for the (rest of the) believers, — We know what We have prescribed for them in respect of their wives and the slave-girls they own --- so that there should be no difficulty for you. And Allah is Most-Forgiving, Very-Merciful. [50] **You may postpone (the turn) of any one you wish from among them, and may accommodate with you any one you wish. And should you recall any one from those whom you kept aside, there is no blame on you. It is more likely, in this way, that their eyes will stay content, and they will not grieve, and all of them will be happy with whatever you give to them. And Allah knows whatever lies in your hearts. And Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise.** [51] **No women are lawful for you after this, nor is it lawful that you replace them (the present wives) with other wives, even though their goodness may attract you,**

except the bond-women you own. And Allah is watchful of every thing. [52]

Commentary

These verses contain seven injunctions about marriage and divorce that are specific to the Holy Prophet ﷺ and these specifics signify his distinctive eminence and his special honor. Some of these injunctions are such that their being specific to the Holy Prophet ﷺ is absolutely plain and obvious and some of them are such that, despite their being general for all Muslims, they are subject to certain conditions and qualifications that are specific to the Holy Prophet ﷺ. The details are given below:

The First injunction

إِنَّآ أَحْلَلْنَا لَكَ أَزْوَاجَكَ الّٰتِيٓ اٰتَيْتَ أُجُوْرَهُنَّ (O prophet We have made lawful *(ḥalāl)* for you all your wives whom you have given their dowers - 50.) Apparently, this ruling is general for all Muslims, because their existing wives are lawful for them too, but the reason for its being specific is that, at the time of revelation of this verse, the Holy Prophet ﷺ had more than four wives, while it is not permissible for Muslims in general to keep more than four wives at any time. So it was particular for the Holy Prophet ﷺ that having more than four wives was made lawful for him.

The words, الّٰتِيٓ اٰتَيْتَ أُجُوْرَهُنَّ "whom you have given their dowers" in this verse are not of restrictive nature nor a pre-condition for permissibility of keeping them as wives, but it is a statement of fact that the Holy Prophet ﷺ had paid the mahr (dower) of all the women with whom he had performed nikah promptly in cash and did not leave it as debt payable by him. His noble practice was to pay or give whatever was due to him immediately and become free of the liability,without delaying it unnecessarily. The statement of this fact is to persuade Muslims in general to follow this practice.

The second Injunction

وَمَا مَلَكَتْ يَمِيْنُكَ مِمَّآ أَفَآءَ اللّٰهُ عَلَيْكَ (And those (bond women) whom you own out of the captives Allah has given to you as spoils of war").

The word أَفَآءَ used here for the spoils of war is فيء *'fai'* which in its technical sense is restricted to the wealth acquired from the enemy without actual fighting. But at times it is used for the spoils of war acquired through actual fighting. Here the word is used in a general

sense. Moreover, it does not mean that only those slave-girls will be lawful for him who would come to him as his share in the spoils of war, but the permissibility covers those bondwomen also who were purchased by him. But, apparently, in this injunction, there is nothing particular for the Holy Prophet ﷺ because this is a rule for all Muslims and the whole Ummah that those bondwomen whom they own as their share in the spoils of war or those who are purchased for a price are lawful for them. At the same time the style of the context indicates that the injunctions contained in these verses should have some special applications for the Holy Prophet ﷺ. As such it is stated in 'Rūḥ ul-Ma'ānī' as a particularity of the Holy Prophet that just as the *nikāḥ* of any of his ﷺ wives with any other Muslim is not lawful after him, similarly any of his bondwomen is not lawful for any Muslim after him ﷺ. Accordingly the *nikāḥ* of Sayyidah Mariyah Al-Qibṭiyyah رضی اللہ عنہا who was sent by the Roman Emperor Muqauqis as gift to the Holy Prophet ﷺ, was not made lawful for anyone after him.

The third Injunction

بَنٰتِ عَمِّکَ وَبَنٰتِ عَمّٰتِکَ The daughters of paternal uncle and of paternal aunts and the daughters of the maternal uncle and of maternal aunt have been made lawful for the Holy Prophet ﷺ. This injunction includes all the women of his "father's family and of his mother's family". And this rule is, though, applicable to all Muslims in general, yet in the case of the Holy Prophet ﷺ it has been subjected to a condition imposed on him exclusively that they must have migrated with him from Makkah- not necessarily in his company or at the same time, but the words, "with you" are to denote that they should have migrated at any time in accordance with his command. If any of them did not migrate for any reason, they did not become lawful for him as was the case with Umm Hani' رضی اللہ عنہا, the daughter of his paternal uncle Abū Ṭalib who, as per her statement, was not lawful for the Holy Prophet ﷺ, because she did not migrate from Makkah.

Migration being the condition of lawfulness for the Holy Prophet ﷺ was only with regard to the women of his parent's family. This condition was not applicable to other women in general - their being Muslim was enough. The wisdom in applying this condition of migration for the women of his parent's family was perhaps that the women of the family

are proud of their family which is unbecoming for the wife of a prophet. This propensity was taken care of by imposing the condition of migration, because only that women would migrate whose love for Allah and His Messenger ﷺ prevails over her love for her family, home and property. Also, one has to suffer great difficulties during migration and these sufferings in the way of Allah have a special place in ones spiritual reform.

Fourth Injunction:

وَامْرَاَةً مُّؤْمِنَةً اِنْ وَّهَبَتْ نَفْسَهَا لِلنَّبِيِّ اِنْ اَرَادَ النَّبِيُّ اَنْ يَّسْتَنْكِحَهَا ۗ خَالِصَةً لَّكَ مِنْ دُوْنِ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ

"And a believing woman who offers herself for (marrying) the prophet without dower if the prophet wishes to bring her into his marriage, these rules being exclusive for you, and not for the (rest of the) believers". (33:50)

The exclusiveness of this exception for the Holy Prophet ﷺ is absolutely obvious, because dower is an essential condition for the marriage of common Muslims, so much so that if, at the time of marriage, the woman says that she does not want any dower or the man says that he will not pay any dower, even this mutual agreement is considered by Sharī'ah as null and void, and dower as prevalent in their families would become compulsory. Only the Holy Prophet ﷺ has been exclusively permitted to marry without dower when the woman is desirous of marriage with him without dower.

Scholars differ in determining whether the Holy Prophet ﷺ did actually marry a woman without dower who offered herself for marriage without dower. Some scholars say that marriage of the Holy Prophet ﷺ with a woman in this way is not proved, whereas some others have proved some such marriages (Rūḥ ul-Ma'ānī)

Some scholars have considered the sentence خَالِصَةً لَّكَ (exclusively for you) to be specific to the fourth injunction, whereas some other commentators like Zamkhshri, etc., have applied it to all the injunctions mentioned before it, meaning that all the above mentioned rules are exclusively for the Holy Prophet ﷺ. And at the end it is stated لِكَيْلَا يَكُوْنَ عَلَيْكَ حَرَجٌ which means that these injunctions have been made exclusive for the Holy Prophet ﷺ to save him from any difficulty. Of these

exclusive rules mentioned above, the first rule wherein more than four wives have been allowed for him and the fourth rule that marriage without dower has been made lawful for him are obviously meant to facilitate and remove difficulties; but the second, third and fifth rules apparently add more conditions which should increase difficulty. But this is a hint that despite these conditions being apparently more strict, they are, in fact, for his good because in their absence he would have suffered from mental anguish. As such, even the additional conditions are to remove his difficulty.

Fifth Injunction:

The fifth injunction deduced from the words "believing women" in the above verses is that unlike the common Muslims who can marry the Christian or Jewish women, it is not permissible for the Holy Prophet ﷺ to marry them. It is necessary for him that his wives are Muslims.

After stating the exclusiveness of the five rules for the Holy Prophet ﷺ, the Holy Qur'ān has briefly mentioned the rule for Muslims in general:

قَدْ عَلِمْنَا مَا فَرَضْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ فِيْٓ اَزْوَاجِهِمْ وَمَا مَلَكَتْ اَيْمَانُهُمْ

"We know what We have prescribed for them in respect of their wives and the slave girls they own" - 50.

It means that the above mentioned rules are exclusive for the Holy Prophet ﷺ, but as for the marriage of other Muslims, Allah Knows what He has prescribed for them. For example, no Muslim can marry a woman without dower and a Muslim is allowed to marry a Christian or a Jewish woman. Similarly, the conditions in the previous rules determined to be obligatory for the Holy Prophet ﷺ are not applicable to other Muslims.

Towards the end, it is said, لِكَيْلَا يَكُوْنَ عَلَيْكَ حَرَجٌ (so that there should be no difficulty for you - 50). It means that these special injunctions in the matter of *nikāḥ* for the Holy Prophet ﷺ were prescribed so that he does not face any difficulty. As for the restrictions and conditions imposed on the Holy Prophet ﷺ and not on other Muslims which appear to be difficult, but keeping in view the expedience and wisdom under which the restrictions were placed, those restrictions were, in fact, to remove the spiritual discomfort and embarrassment.

So far five rules of marriage have been enunciated which have some exclusiveness for the Holy Prophet ﷺ Further on two rules have been stated which are related to the above five rules.

Sixth Injunctions

تُرۡجِیۡ مَنۡ تَشَآءُ مِنۡهُنَّ وَتُـٔۡوِیۡۤ اِلَیۡکَ مَنۡ تَشَآءُ ("You may postpone (the turn) of any one you wish from among them, and may accommodate with you any one you wish." - 51) This rule is specific to the Holy Prophet ﷺ. The normal rule is that a Muslim husband having more than one wife must distribute his nights between his wives in equal numbers and similarly must provide means of sustenance and maintenance to each one of them equally. It is not permissible to violate the principle of equality. But the Holy Prophet ﷺ has been exempted from this rule and has been allowed to postpone the turn of any one of his blessed wives according to his own expedience; he could also recall the one whose turn he had postponed earlier.

Allah Almighty so honored the Holy Prophet ﷺ that he was exempted from observing equality between his wives but the Holy Prophet ﷺ never availed of this concession in practice; he always maintained full equality between all his blessed wives. Imām Abū Bakr al-Jassas has stated that as per narrations of Ḥadīth, the Holy Prophet ﷺ always maintained equality between the blessed wives even after the revelation of this verse; he goes on to a Ḥadīth from Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضی اللہ عنہا, with his own chain of narrators, which is also available in Musnad Ahmad, Tirmidhī, Nasa'I, Abū Dāwūd etc.:

كَانَ رَسُوْلُ اللّٰهِ صَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقْسِمُ فَيَعْدِلُ فَيَقُوْلُ: اَللّٰهُمَّ هٰذَا قسمى فِيْمَا اَمْلِكُ فَلاَ تَلُمْنِىْ فِيْمَا لَا اَمْلِكُ قَالَ اَبُوْدَاوٗد يَعْنِى الْقَلْبَ

> "The Messenger of Allah ﷺ used to maintain equality between all wives and used to supplicate, "O Allah I have maintained equality in whatever is within my power (meaning provision of means of sustenance and in spending of nights), so do not reprove me for that which is not within my power (meaning love and affection being more for someone and less for another that is not within one's control).

According to another narration, also from Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضی اللہ عنہا and reported by Bukhārī, if the Holy Prophet ﷺ had to postpone his visit to any of the blessed wives at her turn, for some reason, he would seek her permission even after the revelation of this verse wherein he was

exempted from observing equality between his blessed wives.

Another Ḥadīth is also well known and is found in all books of Ḥadīth that when it became difficult for the Holy Prophet ﷺ during his last illness to move between the houses of his blessed wives on daily basis, he sought permission from all of them before staying in the house of Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضی اللہ عنہا where he passed the remaining days of his illness.

It was the habit of all the prophets in general, and that of the Holy Prophet ﷺ in particular, that whenever a concession was given to them by Allah Ta'ālā in a rule of Sharī'ah, they generally used to act upon the original rule as a demonstration of their gratitude to Allah, and did not avail of the concession except at a time of a dire need.

The wisdom of Sixth Injunction

The Holy Qur'ān has then stated the wisdom of the sixth injunction i.e. exempting the Holy Prophet ﷺ from maintaining equality between his wives and making all options open for him in this regard. In the words of the Holy Qur'ān the wisdom behind this exemption was the following, ذٰلِكَ اَدْنٰۤى اَنْ تَقَرَّ اَعْيُنُهُنَّ وَلَا يَحْزَنَّ وَيَرْضَيْنَ (it is more likely, in this way, that their eyes will stay content, and they will not grieve, and all of them will be happy with whatever you give to them. - 51)

A doubt may arise here that, apparently, this rule of exemption would be against the wishes and intent of the blessed wives رضی اللہ عنہن and may cause them anguish; how can it be considered to be a source of their happiness? In answer to this question, one has to bear in mind that the real reason for one's grievance is one's perception of his or her due rights. If one believes that a certain right is due on somebody and he is neglecting or violating it, then one feels hurt and aggrieved. But if somebody who does not owe us anything and still gives us something, this act of kindness generates sheer pleasure. Accordingly, when it has been stated that it is not obligatory upon the Holy Prophet ﷺ to observe equality among all the blessed wives رضی اللہ عنہن rather he may use his discretion, then whatever attention and company a wife gets from him would be considered a favor and an act of courtesy and kindness which would be a source of happiness and satisfaction.

At the end of this injunction the Holy Qur'ān has declared:

وَاللّٰهُ يَعْلَمُ مَافِىْ قُلُوْبِكُمْ وَكَانَ اللّٰهُ عَلِيْمًا حَلِيْمًا

"And Allah knows whatever lies in your hearts. And Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise." - 51

The context of the foregoing and forthcoming verses is the mention of the rules peculiar to the Holy Prophet ﷺ in the matter of marriage. In between these rules, the statement that Allah knows whatever lies in your hearts and Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise does not appear to bear any nexus with the subject. It is stated in Rūḥ ul-Ma'ānī that the permission given to the Holy Prophet ﷺ to marry more than four wives or to marry without dower could have created satanic scruples in somebody's mind. So, this verse, coming in between, has directed that Muslims have to guard themselves against such suspicions and scruples and have to firm up their faith that all these exclusive exemptions are given by Allah Almighty on the basis of His infinite wisdom and expedience, and that the selfish desires have no room here.

The pious life of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and the issue of polygamy

The enemies of Islam have always targeted the issue of polygamy, specially the number of the wives of the Holy Prophet ﷺ for their criticism. But if the whole life of the Holy Prophet ﷺ is kept in view, even the Satan cannot find scope to cast doubts on the character of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. It is a proved fact that his first marriage at the age of twenty-five was with Sayyidah Khadijah رضی اللہ عنہا who was an aged widow with children and had been married twice before. The Holy Prophet ﷺ spent his whole prime of life, upto the age of fifty, with that aged wife only. All these fifty years were spent right before the eyes of the people of Makkah who had started his opposition when he was of forty years and had announced his prophethood. His opponents did not leave any stone unturned in harassing and stigmatizing him. They called him a magician, a poet, a mad man, but no enemy could ever find a single chance to cast doubts in his piety, modesty or purity.

At the age of fifty, after the death of Sayyidah Khadijah, he married Sayyidah Sawdah رضی اللہ عنہا who was also a widow.

After migration to Madinah, at the age of fifty-four, in the second year of Hijrah, Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضی اللہ عنہا came to the Holy Prophet's home as wife. He married Sayyidah Hafsah رضی اللہ عنہا a year later and

Sayyidah Zainab bint Khuzaymah رضی اللہ عنہا a few days after that, who expired a few months later. He married Sayyidah Umm Salamah رضی اللہ عنہا, a widow with children, in the year 4 of Hijrah. In the year 5 when he was fifty eight years old, he married Sayyidah Zainab bint Jahsh رضی اللہ عنہا in accordance with Allah's order, as detailed in the beginning of the present surah. The rest of the blessed wives entered his house in the last five years.

The rules pertaining to the private life of a prophet and his domestic affairs constitute a major portion of a religion. The contribution of these nine blessed wives رضی اللہ عنہما to the propagation and education of Islam can be imagined from the fact that Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضی اللہ عنہا alone narrated two thousand two hundred and ten *aḥādīth* and Sayyidah Umm Salamah رضی اللہ عنہا narrated three hundred and sixty-eight *aḥādīth* which have been collected in reliable books. Hafiz Ibn al-Qayyim, in his I'lmul Muwaqqi'in, has commented that the rulings of Sharī'ah (fatawa) disclosed by Sayyidah Umm Salamah رضی اللہ عنہا would constitute a separate book. More than two hundred noble companions of the Holy Prophet ﷺ were disciples of Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضی اللہ عنہا who learnt *ḥadīth, fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence) and fatawa from her.

Another wisdom of bringing a number of the blessed wives رضی اللہ عنہما to the house of the Holy Prophet ﷺ was to attract their clans towards Islam. After keeping these facts in view and considering the general pattern of his pure life, can one find any scope for saying that the multiplicity of his wives was, Allah forbid, to fulfill selfish or sexual desires? If this was the case, why the last stage of life would have been selected for this purpose after spending the whole prime of life either in celibacy or with an aged widow. This subject along with the religious, intellectual, biological and economic issues of the polygamy has been thoroughly discussed with full details under the explanation of the third verse of Sūrah Nisa' in volume II of this book.

Seventh Injunction:

لَا يَحِلُّ لَكَ النِّسَآءُ مِنۢ بَعْدُ وَلَآ اَنْ تَبَدَّلَ بِهِنَّ مِنْ اَزْوَاجٍ وَّلَوْ اَعْجَبَكَ حُسْنُهُنَّ

(No women are lawful for you after this, nor is it lawful that you replace them (the present wives) with other wives, even though their goodness may attract you.- 52).

The words مِنۢ بَعْدُ "after this" in this verse may be interpreted in two ways. One is that no women are lawful for you after the present wives. Some noble companions ﷺ and leading commentators have adopted this meaning. Sayyidnā Anas ﷺ has stated that when the blessed wives رضی اللہ عنہن were given the choice by Allah Ta'ālā to either opt for the pleasure of the worldly life and its charms but separation from the Holy Prophet ﷺ or to remain with him and be content with every economic condition they may face, all of them gave up their demand for increase in maintenance and elected to remain with him. Allah Ta'ālā, as a reward for their decision, restricted the Holy Prophet ﷺ to those nine wives and it was no more permissible for him to marry other women. (Al-Baihaqi, as quoted by Rūḥ-ul- Ma'ānī)

Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ has stated that Allah Ta'ālā has restricted the blessed wives رضی اللہ عنہن exclusively to the Holy Prophet ﷺ in that they could not marry anybody after him. Similarly, the Holy Prophet ﷺ has been restricted to the blessed wives in the sense that he could not marry any other women. Sayyidnā 'Ikrimah has also given this explanation as per one narration.

The second interpretation of these words, as reported by different authorities, like Ibn 'Abbās, 'Ikrimah and Mujahid, according to some narrations is that مِنۢ بَعْدِ "after this" means it is not lawful for the Holy Prophet ﷺ to marry any women beyond the categories mentioned in the earlier verse. For example, the earlier verse has allowed for him only those women of his parents' families who had migrated from Makkah to Madinah either with him or later, according to his command; similarly the restriction that his wife must be a Muslim has made the Christian or Jewish women unlawful for him. As such the meaning of the words, "after this" would be that he cannot marry those women who do not fall in the categories made lawful for him. Thus, according to this explanation, this is not a new injunction; it is rather an elaboration to highlight the consequential outcome of the rule already laid down in the preceding verse . According to this interpretation, this verse does not prohibit marriage with other women after the nine blessed wives رضی اللہ عنہن; instead, it prohibits marriage with non-Muslims and with women of the parents families who did not migrate, as already known from the previous verse.

This second interpretation finds support from a narration of Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضی اللہ عنہا to the effect that the permission of further marriages remained applicable for him (even after the revelation of the present verse)

وَلَا اَنْ تَبَدَّلَ بِهِنَّ مِنْ اَزْوَاجٍ "Nor is it lawful that you replace them (the present wives) with other wives" - 52.

The clear meaning of these words in view of the second explanation of this verse is that although the Holy Prophet ﷺ is permitted to marry other women besides his present wives subject to the conditions mentioned, yet it is not lawful for him to divorce a wife and to marry another woman to replace her.

However, the meaning of these words in view of the first explanation of this verse would be that he can neither marry any woman in addition to the present wives, nor can he replace them by divorcing one and marrying another.

Towards the end of these verses it is clarified that a bond woman owned by the Holy Prophet ﷺ is exempt from fifth and seventh rules in the sense that she is lawful for him, even if she is a Christian or Jew, and it is also permitted for him to replace her with another bondwoman. Lastly it has been reminded that Allah Ta'ālā is watchful of everything's reality, appearance and underlying reasons. All these injunctions and rules are based on divine wisdom and expedience, even if the wisdom is not stated specifically, and hence no one has the right to question them or raise objections against them.

Verses 53 - 55

يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا لَا تَدْخُلُوْا بُيُوْتَ النَّبِيِّ اِلَّآ اَنْ يُّؤْذَنَ لَكُمْ اِلٰى
طَعَامٍ غَيْرَ نٰظِرِيْنَ اِنٰىهُ ۙ وَلٰكِنْ اِذَا دُعِيْتُمْ فَادْخُلُوْا فَاِذَا طَعِمْتُمْ
فَانْتَشِرُوْا وَلَا مُسْتَاْنِسِيْنَ لِحَدِيْثٍ ؕ اِنَّ ذٰلِكُمْ كَانَ يُؤْذِى النَّبِيَّ
فَيَسْتَحْيٖ مِنْكُمْ ۫ وَاللّٰهُ لَا يَسْتَحْيٖ مِنَ الْحَقِّ ؕ وَاِذَا سَاَلْتُمُوْهُنَّ مَتَاعًا

فَسْئَلُوْهُنَّ مِنْ وَّرَآءِ حِجَابٍ ۭ ذٰلِكُمْ اَطْهَرُ لِقُلُوْبِكُمْ وَقُلُوْبِهِنَّ ۭ وَمَا
كَانَ لَكُمْ اَنْ تُؤْذُوْا رَسُوْلَ اللّٰهِ وَلَآ اَنْ تَنْكِحُوْٓا اَزْوَاجَهٗ مِنْۢ بَعْدِهٖٓ
اَبَدًا ۭ اِنَّ ذٰلِكُمْ كَانَ عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ عَظِيْمًا ﴿٥٣﴾ اِنْ تُبْدُوْا شَيْـًٔا اَوْ تُخْفُوْهُ
فَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ كَانَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيْمًا ﴿٥٤﴾ لَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِنَّ فِيْٓ اٰبَاۗىِٕهِنَّ
وَلَآ اَبْنَاۗىِٕهِنَّ وَلَآ اِخْوَانِهِنَّ وَلَآ اَبْنَاۗءِ اِخْوَانِهِنَّ وَلَآ اَبْنَاۗءِ اَخَوٰتِهِنَّ
وَلَا نِسَاۗىِٕهِنَّ وَلَا مَا مَلَكَتْ اَيْمَانُهُنَّ ۚ وَاتَّقِيْنَ اللّٰهَ ۭ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ كَانَ عَلٰي
كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيْدًا ﴿٥٥﴾

O those who believe, do not enter the houses of the Prophet, unless you are permitted for a meal, not (so early as) to wait for its preparation. But when you are invited, go inside. Then, once you have had the meal, then disperse, and (do) not (sit for long) being keen for a chat. This (conduct of yours) hurts the Prophet, but he feels shy of (telling) you (about it). And Allah is not shy of the truth. And when you ask any thing from them (the blessed wives of the Prophet), ask them from behind a curtain. That is better for the purity of your hearts and their hearts. And it is not allowed for you that you hurt Allah's Messenger, nor that you ever marry his wives after him. Indeed, it would be an enormity in the sight of Allah. [53] **If you disclose any thing, or conceal it, Allah is All-Knowing about every thing.** [54] **There is no sin for them (the wives of the Prophet) in (appearing without *ḥijāb* before) their fathers, or their brothers, or the sons of their brothers, or the sons of their sisters, or their own (Muslim) women, or their slave-girls. And (O wives of the Prophet,) fear Allah. Surely, Allah is witness to every thing.** [55]

Commentary

These verses have laid down some etiquettes and rules of Islamic social behavior. The reason for mentioning them in the context of the previous verses is that these rules were initially revealed for the Holy Prophet's household and his wives, although their applicability is not specific or exclusive to him.

The First Injunction

Etiquettes for hosts and guests

يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا لَا تَدْخُلُوْا بُيُوْتَ النَّبِيِّ اِلَّآ اَنْ يُّؤْذَنَ لَكُمْ اِلٰى طَعَامٍ غَيْرَ نٰظِرِيْنَ اِنٰىهُ ۙ وَلٰكِنْ اِذَا دُعِيْتُمْ فَادْخُلُوْا فَاِذَا طَعِمْتُمْ فَانْتَشِرُوْا وَلَا مُسْتَاْنِسِيْنَ لِحَدِيْثٍ

(O those who believe, do not enter the houses of the Prophet, unless you are permitted for a meal, not (so early as) to wait for its preparation. But when you are invited, go inside. Then, once you have had the meal, then disperse, and (do) not (sit for long) being keen for a chat. This (conduct of yours) hurts the Prophet, but he feels shy of (telling) you (about it). And Allah is not shy of the truth). (33:53)

This verse has laid down three rules pertaining to a situation where a person is invited to have meal in someone's house. These rules are applicable to all Muslims in general, but since they were prompted by an incident which took place in the house of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, therefore the Prophet's ﷺ house has been mentioned in the text.

The first rule is: لَا تَدْخُلُوْا بُيُوْتَ النَّبِيِّ اِلَّآ اَنْ يُّؤْذَنَ لَكُمْ "Do not enter the houses of the Prophet, unless you are permitted.."

The second etiquette is that despite invitation to dine and permission to enter the house, one should not enter the house so early as to wait for the meal's preparation; rather he should go inside the house when he is invited to do so.

The third etiquette is that once the invitees have had the meal, they should disperse and should not sit for long being keen for a chat. This direction is restricted to the general cases where guests' sitting for long after having the meal causes inconvenience to the host, either because the host wants to get busy with his own work, or because he has to serve meals to others after these guests. But where the practice and norm is that the guests remaining busy in conversation till late after they had their meals does not pose any problem for the hosts, as it has become customary in dinners and parties these days, this rule would not apply, because the next sentence of the verse has specifically highlighted the reason of this rule where it is said that this behavior brings discomfort to the Holy Prophet ﷺ. In the specific incident that was the cause of the revelation of this verse, the meals were served in the ladies apartments of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and the discomfort caused to the family members

because of the guests staying till late is obvious.

The verse also states that although such behavior of the guests hurts the Holy Prophet ﷺ, yet since they are his own guests, he feels shy of telling and educating them them about it, but Allah Ta'ālā is not shy of telling them the truth.

The above sentence of the verse also tells us the extent to which a host is required to show respect and give honor and regard to his guests, because despite the fact that it was one of the obligations of the Holy Prophet ﷺ to teach people how they should behave when they are invited as guests, he postponed to teach his own guests this etiquette (lest they should feel disgraced) till Allah Ta'ālā Himself taught this etiquette in the Qur'ān.

The Second Injunction - Ḥijāb for Women

وَإِذَا سَأَلْتُمُوهُنَّ مَتَاعًا فَسْئَلُوهُنَّ مِن وَرَآءِ حِجَابٍ ۚ ذَٰلِكُمْ أَطْهَرُ لِقُلُوبِكُمْ وَقُلُوبِهِنَّ ۚ

And when you ask any thing from them (the blessed wives of the Prophet), ask them from behind a curtain. That is better for the purity of your hearts and their hearts. (33:53)

This rule has also been prompted by a particular incident involving the blessed wives ﷺ, but the rule is general for the whole Ummah. Briefly, the rule states that if non-*maḥram* men have to ask anything of common use from women, they should ask them from behind a curtain - not face to face. The reason stated for this rule is that it is better for the purity of the hearts of both.

The special Importance of Women's Ḥijāb

It is worth noting here that the men and women who are the direct addressees of these rules of ḥijāb are, on the one hand, the women who are the blessed wives رضی اللہ عنہما of the Holy Prophet ﷺ the purification of whose hearts has been undertaken by Allah Ta'ālā Himself as mentioned in the verse preceding the present one, and on the other hand they are the men who are the noble companions ﷺ of the Holy Prophet ﷺ many of whom have been exalted even above angels. Despite all these credentials, *ḥijāb* was deemed to be necessary between men and women for the purity of their hearts and to protect them from sensual scruples. Who can claim that his inner-self is purer than those of the noble companions ﷺ and the inner-selves of his women are purer than those of

the blessed wives رضی اللہ عنہن and thus believe that mixing of men and women would not have any bad consequences?

The Background of the revelation of these verses

Different incidents have been related by the commentators as the background for the revelation of the these verses. But there is no contradiction between these narrations, because it is likely that all these incidents combined together constitute the reason for the revelation. As for the first verse which lays down the etiquettes of guests, its background is mentioned by Sulaymān Ibn Arqam, as reported by Ibn Abī Hatim, that it was revealed about some boorish people who would enter a house without being invited and keep waiting there for the preparation of a meal.

And Imām 'Abd Ibn Ḥumaid has reported the statement of Sayyidnā Anas ﷺ that this verse was revealed about some people who would look for an opportunity to enter and sit in the Holy Prophet's ﷺ house well before the time of dining, remain busy in conversation between themselves till the preparation of the meal and then would join the dining. These incidents took place before the injunction of *ḥijāb* when men used to enter women's apartments.

As for the second rule relating to the *ḥijāb* of women, Imām Bukhari has cited two narrations about the reason for its revelation. One is narrated by Sayyidnā Anas ﷺ that Sayyidnā 'Umar Ibn Khaṭṭāb ﷺ said to the Holy Prophet ﷺ, "O Messenger of Allah ! you are visited by all sorts of people, and as such it appears advisable that you order your blessed wives رضی اللہ عنہن to observe Ḥijāb". At this, the verse of *ḥijāb* was revealed.

Imām Bukhari and Imām Muslim both have reported the following statement of Sayyidnā 'Umar Ibn Khaṭṭāb ﷺ :

وافقتُ ربّی فی ثلث: قلت یا رسول اللّٰہ! لو اتخذت فی مقام ابرٰھیم مَصَلًّی، فانزل اللّٰہ تعالٰی وَاتَّخِذُوْا مِنْ مَّقَامِ اِبْرٰهِيْمَ مُصَلًّى وَقُلْتُ: یَارَسُوْلَ اللّٰہِ! اِنَّ نِسَآءَکَ یَدْخُلُ عَلَیْھِنَّ الْبَرُّ وَالْفَاجِرُ فَلَوْ حجبتھن فَاَنْزَلَ اللّٰہُ اٰیَةَ الْحِجَاب وَقُلْتُ لِاَزْوَاجِ النَّبِیِّ صَلَّی اللّٰہُ عَلَیْہِ وَسَلَّمَ لَمَّا تمالأن عَلَیْہِ فِی الْغَیْرَةِ عَسٰی رَبُّہٗ اِنْ طَلَّقَکُنَّ اَنْ یُّبْدِلَہٗ اَزْوَاجًا خَیْرًا مِّنْکُنَّ، فَنَزَلَتْ کَذٰلِکَ

"My opinion appeared to be in consonance with my Lord in three things. One is that I asked the Holy Prophet ﷺ to adopt the Station of Ibrāhīm (Maqām Ibrāhīm) as the place of your prayers (Ṣalāh). Then Allah Ta'ālā revealed the verse وَاتَّخِذُوا مِنْ مَّقَامِ إِبْرٰهِيمَ مُصَلًّى (And take the Station of Ibrāhīm as a place of prayer). And I said to the Holy Prophet ﷺ that all sorts of good and bad people appear before your blessed wives رضى الله عنهن ; it would be better if you ask them to observe *ḥijāb*. Then the verse of *ḥijāb* was revealed. And when the blessed wives رضى الله عنهن of the Holy Prophet ﷺ developed envy between themselves, I told them that if the Messenger of Allah ﷺ divorces you, it is not unlikely that Allah Ta'ālā may provide him wives better than you. So Qur'ān was revealed in the same very words."

Sayyidnā 'Umar's respectful speech is worth noting that instead of saying that his Lord accorded with him in three things, he said that his opinion was found to be in consonance with Him in three things.

Another narration reported in Ṣaḥīḥ of Bukhārī, also from Sayyidnā Anas ؓ is that he said:

"I know the facts about the verse of *ḥijāb* more than anybody else, because I was present when Sayyidah Zainab bint Jahsh رضى الله عنها, after her marriage with the Holy Prophet ﷺ, entered his house and was present in the house with him, when some of the people whom he had invited for *walimah* (the dining arranged after consummation of marriage) which he ﷺ had got prepared for them, just kept sitting there and talking. The narration in Tirmidhī adds that the Holy Prophet ﷺ was also present there along with Sayyidah Zainab رضى الله عنهن and she had turned her face towards the wall due to modesty. The Holy Prophet ﷺ was displeased by the people sitting there so long; he went out of the house to meet and greet other blessed wives رضى الله عنهن. When he came back, they were still there. And then they realized and dispersed. The Holy Prophet entered the house, but came out after a little while. I was present there. He recited this verse of *ḥijāb* which had been revealed just at that time.

The narrations of Ḥadīth mention these three incidents as the causes for the revelation of the verses of *ḥijāb*. There is no contradiction between them, because possibly all the three incidents combined together constitute the cumulative cause of the revelation of these verses.

The Third Injunction

وَمَا كَانَ لَكُمْ اَنْ تُؤْذُوْا رَسُوْلَ اللّٰهِ وَلَآ اَنْ تَنْكِحُوْآ اَزْوَاجَهٗ مِنْۢ بَعْدِهٖٓ اَبَدًا ("And it is not allowed for you that you hurt Allah's Messenger, nor that you ever marry his wives after him".) (33:53)

The first part of this verse has declared all such utterances and actions unlawful (*ḥarām*) which cause anguish or hurt to the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Then it is laid down that no one can marry his blessed wives رضی اللہ عنہن after him.

All the rules mentioned in this verse are though addressed to the Holy Prophet ﷺ or his blessed wives رضی اللہ عنہن, their application is general for the whole Ummah, except this last rule which is specific to the blessed wives رضی اللہ عنہن that they cannot marry any one after him, while the rule for the *Ummah* in general is that after the death of the husband, his wife can marry another person after the expiry of the period of *'iddah*. The reason may be that according to Qur'ān, the blessed wives of the Holy Prophet ﷺ are mothers of the Muslims, and although their being mothers does not affect their spiritual offspring in the sense that, being brothers and sisters, they would not be able to marry each other, yet their motherhood was limited to their own-selves in the sense that they cannot marry anyone.

It may also be said that they Holy Prophet ﷺ is alive in his honored grave, his ﷺ expiry being like a husband missing from his home. That is why his inheritance was not distributed, and that is why his blessed wives رضی اللہ عنہن were not in the same situation as that of the wives of common men after the death of their husbands.

Another reason for this injunction is that according to the rule of Sharī'ah, every woman in Paradise would be with her last husband. Sayyidnā Hudhaifah رضی اللہ عنہ had told his wife at his death that if you wish to be my wife in Paradise, do not marry any one after me because in Paradise, a woman would go to her last husband. (Qurṭubī)

So, the honor that Allah Ta'ālā had bestowed upon the blessed wives رضی اللہ عنہن in this world was thus preserved for them in paradise also by forbidding their marriage to anyone after him.

Besides, no husband naturally likes that his wife should marry

anyone, but for common people, the Sharī'ah did not make it necessary to fulfill this desire. Allah Ta'ālā, by respecting this natural desire of the Holy Prophet ﷺ bestowed an exclusive honour upon him.

There is a consensus in the Ummah that the above rules apply to all the blessed wives رضی اللہ عنہن who remained in the bond of marriage with the Holy Prophet ﷺ till his expiry. However there are different views about whether or not this rule is applicable to those of his wives who were either divorced by him or who separated from him for some other reason. Qurṭubī has detailed these views.

إِنَّ ذٰلِكُمْ كَانَ عِندَاللّٰهِ عَظِيمًا (Indeed, it would be an enormity in the sight of Allah - 53). It means that causing any harm to or to hurt the Holy Prophet ﷺ in any way or to marry his wives after him would be an enormity in the eyes of Allah.

إِنْ تُبْدُوْا شَيْئًا اَوْتُخْفُوْهُ فَإِنَّ اللّٰهَ كَانَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمًا (If you disclose any thing, or conceal it, Allah is All-Knowing about every thing - 33:54). It has been repeated again in this verse that Allah Ta'ālā knows even the intents and thoughts hidden in the hearts. So whether you disclose or conceal, Allah Ta'ālā knows it all.What is being emphasized here is that one should not let any doubt or suspicion enter one's mind or heart about the above-stated rules, and must avoid any violation of these rules.

The issue of Ḥijāb for women, out of the three injunctions in the above mentioned verse, needs some further elaboration which is being given below.

Injunctions of Ḥijāb

And the Islamic system for prevention of misdeeds

Immodesty, adultery and the overtures leading to them are some of those destructive evils of this world which do not only affect the individuals, but also ruin families and tribes, and sometimes destroy large countries as well. If the cases of murder and plunder in this world are thoroughly investigated, sexual emotions would be found behind the scenes. This is the reason that ever since this world came into existence, there has been no nation, religion or region that has not unanimously believed in the evil and destructive nature of these misdeeds.

The European nations in the present age, after doing away with the religions limits and breaking away from their ancient and entrenched customs and traditions, do not consider adultery a crime in itself and they have moulded their culture and society in such a fashion that sexual anarchy and immodest acts are permitted freely, but even they could not exclude the consequences of these evil acts from the list of the crimes - prostitution, rape and obscenities in public had to be declared punishable offences.

This is really comparable to somebody collecting inflammables, sprinkling oil on them, then setting them on fire and when it bursts into flames, then prohibiting the flames and taking measures to stop them. Another example would be to kindle a fire under a cooking pot and then try to stop it from steaming and boiling.

Islam, on the other hand, when declares some harmful acts as punishable offences, it also imposes restrictions on the overtures leading to them and declares them forbidden also. In the present case the real objective was to prevent adultery and fornication. So the start was made by the rule to keep one's eyes down, by preventing free mixing of men and women, by directing women to stay inside the four walls of houses; by requiring women to cover their bodies from head to feet by means of a covering dress called '*burqa*' or simply by a longish shawl when they have to go out due to some need, and to walk on the side of the street and not to wear perfume or to wear a ringing ornament when going out. If someone crosses all these limits, breaks all these barriers and defies all the restrictions to do what is forbidden, then the punishment is so severe and terrifying that once it is given to some adulterer or fornicator, the whole nation would learn an unforgettable lesson.

The Europeans and their camp-followers have put forward arguments justifying their obscenities by trying to prove the *ḥijāb* for women to be harmful for the society in regard to women's health, economic and social status and by trying to prove the benefits for women being without *ḥijāb*. Their detailed rejoinder has been given by many modern scholars in their books. Here it would be adequate to understand that no crime or sin is devoid of some gain or benefit. Even stealing, robbery, cheating are very profitable in some respects. But when the destructive harms that take place as a result and consequence of these acts come to view, nobody

dares to call them profitable businesses. The absence of *ḥijāb* for women, even if it has economic gains, cannot be called beneficial by sensible and wise people when it engulfs the whole nation and the country in mischief and disorder.

The Golden Islamic Principle of Barring the Ways and Means for Prevention of Crimes in a moderate manner

Just as the basic principles of faith, like belief in the Oneness of Allah, the prophethood and in the life Hereafter are common the religious systems of all the prophets, similarly crimes, obscenities and evil deeds have been held unlawful (*ḥarām*) in all revealed laws and divine religions. But in the previous religions and their laws, the ways and means which led to the violations were not declared absolutely unlawful in themselves, unless a crime or sin was committed through them. But since the Sharī'ah of Islam has to be be in force till the Doomsday, it has been safeguarded by Allah Ta'ālā specially in that not only the crimes and sins but even their causes and means that normally lead one to those crimes and sins have been declared unlawful themselves. For example, when drinking was forbidden, the processing, selling purchasing and presentation of alcoholic drinks was also forbidden. Similarly when interest and usury was forbidden, then all affairs involving interest or resembling usury were also declared unlawful. That is why the Islamic jurists have declared all profits derived from invalid businesses to be filthy earning like interest. To associate any being with Allah Ta'ālā (Shirk) and idolatry have been declared by Qur'ān to be the greatest injustice and unpardonable sins, so severe prohibitions have been placed on their causes and means also. Since the polytheists (*mushrikin*) used to worship the sun at sunrise, sunset and at midday, saying of prayers (Ṣalah) in those particular times would bear a resemblance to sun worshipers and this resemblance itself could lead to 'Shirk', therefore the revealed laws declared even saying of prayers (Ṣalah) and prostration (Sajdah) to be unlawful (Ḥarām) in those times. Statues and pictures of idols are very close to idolatry, so sculpturing of idol's statues and making of their pictures is forbidden and their usage is not permissible.

Similarly while forbidding adultery, all its immediate causes and means have also been declared unlawful by Sharī'ah. To look at any boy or woman with sexual lust is held as a fornication through the eyes, to

hear their speech with that intent is held as fornication through the ears, to touch them as fornication through the hands and to walk in their pursuit as fornication through the feet, as recorded in authentic Ḥadīth. The injunctions of *ḥijāb* for women were revealed to safeguard one against these very sins.

But there is a very long list of causes and means - immediate and distant. if even the distant causes of a sinful act are forbidden, life would become very difficult and considerable difficulty would be faced in carrying out day-to-day affairs which is against the nature of this religion. The Holy Qur'ān's open declaration in this matter is: مَاجَعَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِى الدِّيْنِ مِنْ حَرَجٍ . It means that no difficulty has been placed on you in religion. Therefore, in the matter of causes and means, it was wisely decided that those acts and deeds which are such immediate causes of any sin that, generally, one who commits them does necessarily get involved in that sin, have been annexed with the real sin and forbidden as well. If one commits some acts and deeds that are distant causes of a sin and do not necessarily involve one generally in that sin, but they do have some share in the involvement in it, they have been declared reprehensible (makruh). Those causes which are even farther away from involving one in a sin, and which cause one's involvement in very rare cases, they have been considered permissible.

An example of the first case is selling of alcoholic drinks which has been declared as unlawful as drinking itself, because it is an immediate means of drinking. Similarly touching a non-mahram woman, although not fornication in itself, but since it is an immediate cause and means for it, it has also been declared unlawful like the fornication is unlawful.

An example of the second case would be selling of grapes to a person about whom it is known that he would make wine out of the grapes, either because he is a wine maker by profession or because he has clearly said that this is his purpose for its purchase. This is not unlawful in the same way as selling of alcoholic drinks, but this is reprehensible and not permissible. The same rule applies to renting out land or building for a cinema house or an interest-based bank that if it was known at the time of finalizing the deal or contract that the purpose of living for rent is not permissible, then renting would be Makruh Taḥrimī (reprehensible bordering on being unlawful).

An example of the third case would be selling of grapes to the common public. While it is possible that anyone of them might make wine out of the grapes, but neither has anyone said that he will do so, nor is it in the seller's knowledge that anyone makes wine, such sale and purchase has been considered permissible under the rules.

Important Caution

It is important to note that all those acts and deeds which have been declared unlawful by the rules because they are immediate causes or means of involving one in sin, all of them are absolutely unlawful now after the injunction, irrespective of whether these acts involved one in sin or not; their being unlawful is itself a permanent rule of the religion and its violation is impermissible.

It is easier to understand, after this introductory explanation that *ḥijāb* for women is also based upon this principle of barring the ways and means of a sin that leads to getting involved in sin. Here also the rules for the three categories of causes aforementioned would apply. For example, a young woman's uncovering her body in front of a young man is such an immediate cause of commission of sin that as per general nature of men and women, this act would almost certainly lead to commission of sin. Therefore the rules declare it to be forbidden just as fornication is forbidden. Now that this act has been ruled to be the same as fornication, it is absolutely prohibited, even if the person involved is innocent or he is positive that he would not commit the further sin because he has control over himself. The exemption of the circumstances of necessity, medical treatment, etc. do not effect its being forbidden. Even the change of times and ages do not affect it because the rule is just as applicable today in these times of evil and adultery as it was in the first period of Islam.

The second category of the causes would be that women step out of the four walls of their houses wearing *burqa'* (dress which covers from head to feet) or a longish shawl to cover their bodies completely from head to feet. This is a distant cause of *fitnah* (mischief). The rule in this case is that if doing so would cause *fitnah*, then it is not permissible but if there is no apprehension of *fitnah* in doing so, then it is permissible. Therefore this rule is subject to change depending upon circumstances and times. Such outings of women were not cause of mischief during the period of

the Holy Prophet ﷺ. That is why he had given permission to women to go to mosques after having covered themselves completely from head to feet, subject to certain conditions and he had forbidden people from preventing women from going to mosques. Even at that time, although women were being persuaded to offer their prayers in their own homes, because, for them, the reward of offering prayers in their homes is greater than the reward of offering their prayers in mosques, but they were not disallowed from saying their prayers in mosques because there was no apprehension of *fitnah*. The noble companions ﷺ, after the expiry of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, realized that going of women to mosques, even if they are covered from head to feet, was no longer free from apprehension of *fitnah*, so they evolved a consensus among themselves and stopped women from joining the congregation in mosques. Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضی اللہ عنہا stated that if the Holy Prophet ﷺ could see the circumstances prevailing today, he would, most certainly, have stopped women from going to mosques. This tells us that the decision of the noble companions was no different from that of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, rather the rule itself changed according to the change in conditions as laid down by the Holy Prophet ﷺ.

The rules regarding Ḥijāb for women have been stated in seven verses of the Holy Qur'ān - three in Sūrah An-Nūr earlier, four in Sūrah Al-Aḥzab out of which one is mentioned earlier, the second is under review and the other two would come later, wherein the determination of the category of Ḥijāb, details of the rules and the exemptions have been stated in detail. Similarly, in more than seventy *aḥādīth* of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, the verbal and practical orders of Ḥijāb have been stated. All these injunctions, rules and regulations have been collected by the author in a booklet titled "Tafsilul Khitāb fi TafsīrI 'Ayat- il-ḥijāb" in Arabic language, already published as a part of Sūrah Al-Aḥzab in "Aḥkām- ul Qur'ān", some important extracts of which are being reproduced below.

The Advent of Ḥijāb in Historical Perspective

Free mixing among men and women has never been considered appropriate in the entire history of the world from Sayyidnā 'Ādam عليه السلام to the last prophet, Sayyidnā Muḥammad al-Mustafa ﷺ, and it is no peculiarity of the people following religious codes; in fact, such mixing has not been held as proper in good families universally.

At the time when Sayyidnā Mūsā ﷺ was traveling through Madyan, two women are mentioned in the Holy Qur'ān who were standing aside, holding their flock of goats while waiting for their turn to take these to the water trough. The reason given for this is no other but that these women did not like to push and shove into the crowd of men, instead, preferred to remain content with whatever water was left. The first verse of Ḥijāb was revealed at the time of the marriage of Sayyidah Zainab bint Jahsh رضی اللہ عنہا. Even before its revelation, a narration appearing in the Jami' of Tirmidhī describes the position in which she was sitting in the house: وَهِيَ مُوَلِّيَةٌ وَجْهَهَا اِلَى الْحَائِطِ (and she was [sitting] with her face turned towards the wall).

This tells us that, even before the revelation relating to Ḥijāb, the custom of free mixing among men and women, no-holds-barred dates, rendezvous, get-togethers and chats did not exist among good people anywhere. The First Age of Ignorance marked by personal display (*tabarruj*) by its women referred to in the Qur'ān was something peculiar to bondwomen and women of loose character - certainly, not in good families of Arabia. They saw it as low and reprehensible. The whole history of Arabia bears testimony to this. In India, among the adherents of Hindu, Buddhist and other polytheistic faiths, free mixing between men and women was not tolerated. All those claims of working with men shoulder to shoulder, parading in bazaars and streets, free mixing of men and women in almost every department of life and the chain of intimate contacts in parties and clubs are the product of immodesty and obscenity among Europeans - a disease they too have been afflicted with after having veered away from their past. In those earlier days of theirs, they too were no victims of this situation they are in. Allah Ta'ālā has created women physically different from men. Similarly, He has also placed in their temperaments the essential ingredient of natural modesty which automatically inclines them to maintain a certain aloofness from the general run of men and to remain properly covered. This screen of natural and temperamental modesty has always been present there between women and men since the very beginning. In the early period of Islam too, the mutually imposed absence of free mixing - a forerunner of the Ḥijāb - was of this very nature.

This particular kind of the Ḥijāb of women - that the real place for

women be within the walls of the home and when they have to go out to take care of a need valid in the sight of the Sharī'ah, then, they go out after having covered their whole body - was instituted after the hijrah to Madīnah in the Hijrah year 5. Relevant details follow.

By a consensus of the scholars of Muslim Ummah, the first verse about this kind of Ḥijāb is the one mentioned above: لَاتَدۡخُلُوۡا بُيُوۡتَ النَّبِىِّ (do not enter the houses of the Prophet - 53) and this verse was revealed at the time of the marriage of Sayyidah Zainab bint Jahsh رضى الله عنها and her entry into the home of the prophet as his blessed wife. As for the date of this marriage, Ḥafiz Ibn Hajar in Isabah and Ibn 'Abd-ul-Barr in Isti'ab have reported two sayings that it took place in the Hijrah year 3, or in the Hijrah year 5. Ibn Kathīr has preferred Hijrah year 5. Ibn Sa'd has reported Hijrah year 5 also from Sayyidnā Anas ﷺ, This very view seems to be the preferred one from some narrations of Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضى الله عنها as well. And Allah knows best.

In the cited verse, women were ordered to observe Ḥijāb and men were ordered to ask from them, if they have to ask for something, from behind the Ḥijāb. Here, particular emphasis has been placed on the observation of Ḥijāb in the sense that non-maḥram men and women have to remain apart, however, should there be the need to talk to women, men could do so from behind a Ḥijāb, curtain or something that obstructs the view.

Revealed in the noble Qur'ān there are seven verses about the Ḥijāb of women and its details. Out of these, four have gone by right here in Sūrah Al-Aḥzāb while three of them have already appeared in Sūrah An-Nūr (Mā'ariful-Qur'ān, Volume VI). It is universally agreed upon that the first verse to have been revealed about Ḥijāb is this very verse: لَاتَدۡخُلُوۡا بُيُوۡتَ النَّبِىِّ اِلاَّ اَنۡ يُؤۡذَنَ لَكُمۡ (Do not enter the houses of the prophet, unless you are permitted for a meal - 53). The three verses of Sūrah An-Nūr and the initial verse of Sūrah Al-Aḥzāb where the blessed wives have been commanded to stay in their homes though appear earlier in the order of the Qur'ān, yet in terms of their revelation, they come later. It has been explicitly said in the initial verse of Sūrah Al-Aḥzāb that the said command has been given at a time when the blessed wives were divinely given the right to choose one of the following two courses. If they wanted to have extended worldly means, they should take a divorce from the

Holy Prophet ﷺ, and if they preferred the benefits of the Hereafter and were willing to remain satisfied with whatever worldly means were available to them in their present state of life, then, they could stay married to him.

It has also been mentioned in this event of choice that, among the wives given this choice, Sayyidah Zainab bint Jaḥsh رضی اللہ عنہا was also included. This tells us that her marriage was already solemnized before the revelation of this verse. The said verse came after that. Similarly, there are the verses of Sūrah An-Nūr that carry details relating to Ḥijāb. These are, though earlier in the order of the Qur'ān, but in terms of their sequence of revelation, they too have been revealed with the incident of *Ifk* which came to pass on return from the battle of Banī al-Mustaliq or Muraisi'. This battle took place in the Hijrah year 6 - and the injunctions governing the Islamic legal Ḥijāb came to be enforced from the time when the verse of Ḥijāb was revealed in relevance to the marriage of Sayyidah Zainab رضی اللہ عنہا. The verses of Sūrah An-Nūr relating to Ḥijāb have already appeared in Sūrah An-Nūr (Mā'ariful-Qur'ān, Volume VI).

The difference between the injunctions of *Satr-ul-'Awrah* and Veiling of Women (Ḥijāb)

The part of the body, of a man or woman, called *'awrah* عورت in Arabic, *satr* (ستر) in Urdu and Persian is something the concealing of which is obligatory for everyone - legally, naturally and rationally - and is, after the initial article of Faith ('Imān), the foremost obligation which must be carried out necessarily by concealing the private parts of the body. This duty has remained an obligation since the very beginning and has been a standing obligation in all religious codes brought by the noble prophets علیہم السلام. In fact, even before the advent of religious codes when, because of the tasting of the forbidden fruit in Jannah, the Paradisical apparel of Sayyidnā 'Ādam and Sayyidah Ḥawwā' came off leaving the cover-worthy parts of the body uncovered, even in that situation which was beyond his control, Sayyidnā 'Ādam عليه السلام did not take it as permissible. Therefore, both of them, Sayyidnā 'Ādam and Sayyidah Ḥawwā', covered their private parts by placing a string of leaves over them. Thus, their *'awrah* came to be concealed. This is what is meant by the verse of the Qur'ān: طَفِقَا يَخْصِفَانِ عَلَيْهِمَا مِن وَّرَقِ الْجَنَّةِ (and they began to patch together upon themselves some leaves of Paradise - 7:22). From the

coming of Sayyidnā 'Ādam ﷺ into this world right up to the last of the prophets, Sayyidnā Muḥammad al-Muṣṭafa ﷺ, the concealment of '*awrah* has remained obligatory in the religious code of every prophet. There could be a difference in the precise determination and limitation of body parts to be concealed, but the essential obligation of *satr* is decisively established in all religious codes of the prophets. Then, this obligation applies to all human beings, men and women, in its own right - whether nor not there be someone else to see. For this reason, should there be a person who offers his Ṣalah in naked state in the darkness of night -then, despite the fact that nobody is seeing him,his Ṣalah will not be acceptable, if he does have with him something to wear that is sufficient to cover the private parts of his body (Satr) - (Al-Baḥr- ur-Rā'iq).

There is no difference of opinion in the fact that it is obligatory to cover those parts of the body which are included in '*awrah*' before people, even when one is not performing Ṣalah. But, in a state of privacy where no one is around to look, even there, it is not permissible, according to the correct view, to sit naked with one's coverable parts ('*awrah*) exposed without a need recognized by the Sharī'ah, (Al-Baḥr from Sharḥ al-Munyah).

This much was about the injunction of *satr-ul-'awrah* (the concealment of the coverable parts of the body) which has been obligatory from the advent of Islam, rather, from the very beginning, in all religious codes of the noble prophets, and in which, men and women are equal, equal in private and in public, just as it is not permissible to be naked before people, it is also not permissible to stay unnecessarily naked when alone or in private.

The second issue - the Ḥijāb of women

Ḥijāb essentially requires that women do not appear before male strangers without proper cover. About this issue, at least this much has always remained established among prophets and the righteous and noble persons that there should be no free mixing between male strangers and women. In the incident about the two daughters of Sayyidnā Shu'aib ﷺ, it is mentioned in the Qur'ān (Sūrah Al-Qaṣaṣ, 28:23, Part 20) that when the girls went to water their goats on the public well in the locality, they found it crowded with people who were watering their own flocks. It appears in the Qur'ān that these girls were standing aside, aloof from them. Sayyidnā Mūsā ﷺ, who was passing by as a traveler, saw the

girls standing so aloof from others. When he asked them about the reason for it, they told him two things:

1. 'Right now, there is a crowd of men out there. We shall water our goats when these people will have finished watering gone'.

2. 'Our father is old and weak' which indicates that coming out to water domestic animals was not the job of women in terms of the commonly recognized practice. But, it was because of the old age and weakness of the father, or because of the absence of any other man around, they had to do this job.

This state of the daughters of Sayyidnā Shu'aib ﷺ pointed out in the noble Qur'ān tells us that, even during that time and in their religious code too, free mixing of men and women and their working together shoulder to shoulder was not liked. In fact, any job which caused free contact with men was just not entrusted with women. However, keeping this whole thing in view, it appears that the injunction requiring women to observe regular Ḥijāb was yet to be enforced formally. Similarly, during the early period of Islam, the same situation kept prevailing. It was in the Hijrah year 3 or 5 that women were obligated with the observance of Ḥijāb before male strangers, the details of which appear later.

Now we know that the satr of *'awrah* and the Ḥijāb of women are two separate issues and different from each other. Satr-ul-'awrah (concealment of coverable parts) has always been obligatory. The Ḥijāb of women was made obligatory in the Hijrah year 5. Satr-ul-'awrah is obligatory on men and women both while Ḥijāb is obligatory on women only. Satr-ul-'awrah is obligatory both in public and in private while Ḥijāb is obligatory only in the presence of male strangers. These details have been provided for the reason that by the jumbling of both these issues so many doubts rise impeding the understanding of the rulings and injunctions of the Qur'ān. For example, the face and the palms of a woman are excluded from Satr-ul-'awrah under the authority of consensus (*ijma'*). Therefore, should the face and palms remain uncovered in the state of Ṣalāh, the Ṣalāh is permissible, as agreed upon and as borne by consensus. As for face and palms, these are exempt in accordance with definitive textual authority. The feet have been

exempted by Muslim jurists on the analogy of face and palms.

But, whether or not the face and palms are exempted in the observance of Ḥijāb before male strangers is a matter in which difference exists, details of which have appeared earlier under the commentary on the verse of Sūrah An-Nūr: لَا يُبْدِيْنَ زِيْنَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا (and must not expose their adornment except that which appears thereof - 24:31), a summary of which will follow later.

The degrees of Islamic legal Ḥijāb and the injunctions relating to them

The sum of seven verses of the Qur'ān and seventy narrations of Ḥadīth about the Ḥijāb of women seems to be that the real objective desirable in the sight of the Sharī'ah is Ḥijāb-ul-ashkhas i.e. physical hiding of women from strangers. In other words, women and their movement should remain hidden from the sight of men, something that can be accomplished by means of the four walls of homes or tents or hanging curtains. All forms of Ḥijāb allowed other than this are all restricted by or conditional with the ground of need, time of need and measure of need.

Thus, the first degree of Ḥijāb - which is the really desired objective of the Sharī'ah - is that women stay in their homes. But, the Sharī'ah of Islam is a comprehensive and complete social system in which full consideration has been given to all human needs. Then, it is all too obvious that women will face inevitable circumstances when they have to go out of the house at some or the other time. For this purpose, the second degree of Ḥijāb, in the light of the Qur'ān, and Sunnah, seems to be that they should go out wearing a *burqa'* or long *shawl* concealing their whole body. To see their way, they leave only one eye open from inside the sheet, or use a patch of net before the eyes as is placed in a *burqa'* for this purpose. On occasions of need, this second degree of Ḥijāb too - like the first one - is agreed upon among all Muslim scholars and jurists.

From some narrations of Ḥadīth, there seems to emerge a third degree of Ḥijāb as well - in which the views of Ṣaḥābah, the Tabi'in and the jurists of Muslim community differ - according to which women, when they go out from the house, of necessity, they can let their face and palm remain open before people subject to the condition that their entire body is

concealed. A detailed description of these three degrees of Islamic legal Ḥijāb follows.

The first degree of Ḥijāb from people by virtue of staying home

According to the Qur'ān and Sunnah, this degree is the one really desired. It stands clearly proved by the verse of Sūrah Al-Aḥzāb under study right now: وَإِذَا سَأَلْتُمُوهُنَّ مَتَاعًا فَاسْئَلُوهُنَّ مِنْ وَّرَآءِ حِجَابٍ "And when you ask any thing from them (the blessed wives of the Prophet), ask them from behind a curtain - 53." Still more explicit is the very initial verse of Sūrah Al-Aḥzāb, that is: وَقَرْنَ فِي بُيُوتِكُنَّ (And remain in your homes.) The manner in which the Holy Prophet ﷺ put the guidance given in these verses into practice hardly leaves room for any further explanation.

We have already come to know that the first verse about the Ḥijāb of women was revealed at the time of the marriage of Sayyidah Zainab رضى الله عنها. As in the narrations of Ḥadīth, Sayyidnā Anas رضي الله عنه said, "I know this event of Ḥijāb more than anyone else for the reason that, at that time, I was present in the company of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. When this verse requiring the observance of Ḥijāb was revealed, he put a sort of make-shift curtain from a sheet and had thus made Sayyidah Zainab رضى الله عنها seated hidden behind it - not that he would conceal her personally in a *burqa'* or long sheet.

The event relating to Sayyidnā 'Umar Ibn Khaṭṭāb رضي الله عنه appearing under the Background of Revelation described earlier also seems to indicate that Sayyidnā 'Umar رضي الله عنه simply wished that the blessed wives stay inside, away from the sight of men - as is evident from the words he used on this occasion: يَدْخُلُ عَلَيْكَ الْبَرُّ وَالْفَاجِرُ (among those coming to you there are [all sorts of people] the righteous and the sinning).

According to a narration of Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضى الله عنها appearing in the chapter of the battle of Mutah in the Ṣaḥīḥ of al-Bukhārī, when the Holy Prophet ﷺ was informed of the Shahadah (martyrdom) of Sayyidnā Zayd Ibn Harithah, Ja'far and 'Abdullāh Ibn Rawahah رضي الله عنهم, he was in the Masjid. His blessed face showed signs of intense grief and shock. I was watching what was happening there from inside my room through a crack in the door.

This proves that, the Ummul-Mu'minin, even at the time of such a shocking occurrence, did not come out in a *burqa'* to join the crowd of

people, instead, witnessed the proceedings from a crack in the door.

And in the chapter on 'Umratu 'l-Qada' in Kitāb- ul-Maghazī of the Ṣaḥīḥ of al-Bukhari, it appears that the nephew of Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضى الله عنها, Sayyidnā 'Urwah Ibn Zubayr ﷺ, and Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Umar ﷺ were sitting in the Mosque of the Prophet fairly close to the outer side of the living quarters of Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah and were busy talking about the 'Umra visits of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Sayyidnā Ibn 'Umar ﷺ says that, during that time, we could hear the voice of Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah doing her *miswak* and clearing her throat coming out from inside the living quarters. Onward from here, mentioned there are the 'Umra visits of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. From this narration too, we learn that soon after the revelation of the verses of Ḥijāb, it had become the regular practice of the blessed wives that they would observe Ḥijāb virtually by staying at home.

Similarly, there is a Ḥadīth in the chapter on the battle of Ṭa'if in the Ṣaḥīḥ of al-Bukhari saying that the Holy Prophet ﷺ gargled in a utensil of water and gave it to Sayyidnā Abu Mūsā and Bilāl ﷺ to drink and wipe their faces with. Ummul-Mu'minin, Sayyidah Umm Salamah رضى الله عنها was watching this incident from behind a curtain. She called the two blessed souls from inside the curtain asking them to spare a little from that *tabarruk* for their mother (meaning for herself).

This Ḥadīth too testifies that soon after the revelation of the order of Ḥijāb, the blessed wives used to stay inside homes and behind curtains.

Special Note

Also noteworthy in this narration is the fact that even the blessed wives of the Holy Prophet ﷺ were fond of his *tabarrukat* (plural of *tabarruk* meaning something blessed) just like other Muslims. This too is a singularity of his sanctified person alone, otherwise, the informal relationship a husband has with his wife would have made it habitually impossible to maintain this degree of reverence.

And according to a narration of Sayyidnā Anas ﷺ in Kitāb-ul-'Adab of the Ṣaḥīḥ of al-Bukhari, he and Sayyidnā Abū Ṭalḥah ﷺ were once going somewhere with the Holy Prophet ﷺ. He was riding a camel. Ummul-Mu'minin, Sayyidah Safiyyah رضى الله عنها was also riding with him. En route, the camel stumbled all of a sudden and, according to the

report of Sayyidnā Abū Ṭalḥah, when he and Sayyidah Ṣafiyyah fell down from the back of the camel, Abū Ṭalḥah presented himself before him and submitted, 'May Allah accept me as ransom for you, are you hurt?' He said, 'No, you take care of the woman.' The first thing Sayyidnā Abū Ṭalḥah did was to hide his face with a piece of cloth, then he reached Sayyidah Ṣafiyyah and threw a sheet of cloth over her after which she stood up. Then, in the same manner, keeping her hidden behind proper cover, he had her mount her camel.

In this event too which came suddenly in the form of an accident, there is a lesson. It provides testimony to the fact that the noble Ṣaḥabah and the blessed wives gave great importance to the matter of Ḥijāb. The attention paid and the care and concern shown in this incident hardly leave any room for further explanations.

A Ḥadīth of Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ud ﷺ in Jami' of Tirmidhī reports that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said:

إِذَا خَرَجَتِ الْمَرْاَةُ اسْتَشْرَفَهَا الشَّيْطٰنُ (قال الترمذى هذا حديث حسن صحيح غريب)

> When a woman comes out (of her house), the Shaytan marks her out (that is, makes her a means of spreading evil among Muslims) - (Tirmidhī has termed this Ḥadīth as *ḥasan, ṣaḥīḥ, gharīb*').

And Ibn Khuzaymah and Ibn Ḥibban have also reported the following additional words in this Ḥadīth: وَاَقْرَبُ مَاتَكُوْنُ مِنْ وَّجْهِ رَبِّهَا وَهِىَ فِىْ قَعْرِ بَيْتِهَا (And [a woman] is closer to her Rabb [Lord] when she is [hidden] in the midmost [section] of her house.

Present in this Ḥadīth too is the evidence of the fact that the real thing for women is no other but that they stay in their homes and do not go out (occasions of need remaining an exception).

And in a Ḥadīth; the Holy Prophet ﷺ has said: لَيْسَ لِلنِّسَآءِ نَصِيْبٌ فِى الْخُرُوْجِ اِلَّا مُضْطَرَّةً (For women, there is no share in going out except when inevitable) - reported by Ṭabarānī, as quoted by Kanz, p. 283, v. 8)

And says a narration from Sayyidnā 'Alī ﷺ: 'Once I was present in the company of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. He asked the noble Ṣaḥabah, اَىُّ شَىْءٍ خَيْرٌ لِلْمَرْاَةِ" What is better for women? The Ṣaḥabah kept silent. They said nothing in response. Later, when I went home, I repeated the same

question before Faṭimah رضى الله عنها. She said, لَايَرَيْنَ الرِّجَالَ وَلَا يَرَوْنَهُنَّ [that is, it is better for women that] 'neither they see men, nor are seen by them.' When I reported the answer given by her to the Holy Prophet ﷺ, he said, صَدَقَتْ اِنَّها بِضْعَةٌ مِنِّى (She said it right. Of course, she is a part of me).

The reason why Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضى الله عنها was left behind in the wilderness during the event of Ifk was no other but that the Ḥijāb of the blessed wives was not simply restricted to the *burqa'* or long sheet, in fact, even while traveling, they used to be in their camel-litter (*shughduf* or hawdaj). This *shughduf* itself was mounted on the camel and was dismounted as such. A *shughduf* is like a miniature roomette for the traveler. During the course of this event, when the caravan started leaving, the attendants following their usual practice mounted the shughduf on the back of the camel assuming that the Ummul-Mu'minīn was already in there. But, the truth of the matter was that she was not there in it, rather, had gone out of it for physical relief. It was in this misunderstanding that the caravan departed and the Ummul-Mu'minīn was left behind in the wilderness.

This event too is a strong evidence of the fact that the sense of Islamic legal Ḥijāb as understood by the Holy Prophet ﷺ and his blessed wives was but that women stay in their homes and, if traveling, in their shughduf (camel-litter), their presence was not to be exposed before men. Then, this was the care and concern shown regarding the observance of Ḥijāb from men in the state of travel. From this, one can imagine the level of importance of Ḥijāb when a woman is in her normal residence.

The second degree of Ḥijāb with *burqa'*

On occasions of need, when a woman has to go out of her house, she is required to be covered up from the head to the feet in some *burqa'* or long sheet in a manner that no part of the body is left exposed. This has its proof in the verse (59) of Sūrah Al-Aḥzāb that is coming up a little later: يَاَيُّهَا النَّبِىُّ قُلْ لِّاَزْوَاجِكَ وَبَنٰتِكَ وَنِسَآءِ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ يُدْنِيْنَ عَلَيْهِنَّ مِنْ جَلَابِيْبِهِنَّ (O prophet, tell your wives and your daughters and the women of the believers that they should draw down their shawls over them - 33:59). The original word used by the Qur'ān for 'shawls' is *jilbāb* (plural: *jalābīb*) which is a long sheet in which a woman gets to be hidden from the head to the feet. (This has been reported from Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ)

Ibn Jarīr has, citing his own chains of authority, has reported from Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ the manner in which a *jilbāb* is used, that is, a woman should be wrapped therein, from the head to the feet, and that her face and nose too be hidden behind it - leaving only one eye uncovered to see the way. A detailed explanation of this verse will appear later. Here, the only purpose is to point out that, on occasion of need, when a woman has to go out of the house, then, she has to opt for this degree of Ḥijāb, that is, she be covered up with a *jilbāb* or something similar from the head to the feet, and that her face too - with the exception of one eye - be hidden.

This form too is permissible on occasions of need in accordance with the consensus of the jurists of the Muslim community. But, there are Ṣaḥīḥ (sound) *aḥadīth* where some restrictions have been placed even on the choice of this form, for example, she should not be wearing perfume, or ringing ornaments, and that she should walk on the side of the street and that she should not enter a crowd of men.

The third degree of Islamic legal Ḥijāb about which jurists differ

The third degree of Ḥijāb is that the whole body of the woman is hidden from the head to the feet, but the face and palms remain open. The question whether this degree of Ḥijāb (where face and palms are exposed) is permissible has been a matter of difference of opinion between Muslim jurists which has emerged from different interpretations of the words إِلَّا مَا ظَهَرَ (except that which is open) occurring in Sūrah An-Nūr (24:31) Some commentators have interpreted these words to mean the face and palms, and therefore they have exempted them from Ḥijāb, and have held that it is permissible to leave them open. (as reported from Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās). But there are others among them who take the expression to mean *burqa', jilbāb* etc. These commentators hold it impermissible to expose face and palms. (as reported by Sayyidnā Ibn Mas'ūd). But, even according to those who have called it permissible,the permissibility is subject to the condition that there should be no apprehension of *fitnah* (situation resulting in some evil consequence). Since the face of a woman is at the center of her beauty and embellishment, therefore, the absence of any apprehension of *fitnah* is a rare likelihood. Ultimately, for this reason, under normal conditions, opening the face etc. is not permissible even according to the first group of commentators.

Three Imāms - Mālik, Shafi'ī and Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal - out of the four took to the strict position and held it absolutely impermissible to expose face and palms, whether or not there is an apprehension of *fitnah*. As for Imām Abū Ḥanifah, he has, though, taken a different view, yet he has subjected it to the condition that there is no apprehension of *fitnah,* and since this condition remains customarily missing, therefore, Ḥanafi jurists too have not permitted the opening of the face and palms before non-Maḥrams.

The citations regarding the views of the four Imāms have been given in detail with reference to authentic books of these schools in this humble writer's treatise entitled *Tafsīl-ul-Khitāb,* published as part of the major work on *Aḥkam-ul-Qur'ān.* Since the original ruling of the Ḥanafī jurists opts for the exemption of the face and palms from Ḥijāb, therefore, a few citations of the Ḥanafī jurists are being given here in which it is mentioned that, due to the apprehension of *fitnah,* exposing face and palms is forbidden :

اِعْلَمْ اَنَّهُ لَا مُلَازَمَةَ بَيْنَ كَوْنِهِ لَيْسَ عَوْرَةً وَجَوَازِ النَّظَرِ اِلَيْهِ، فَحِلُّ النَّظَرِ مَنُوْطٌ لِعَدَمِ خَشْيَةِ الشَّهْوَةِ مَعَ انْتِفَآءِ الْعَوْرَةِ، وَلِذَاحُرِّمَ النَّظَرُ اِلٰى وَجْهِهَا وَوَجْهِ الْاَمْرَدِ اِذَاشَكَّ فِي الشَّهْوَةِ وَلَا عَوْرَةَ. (فتح القدير، ص ۱۸۱ ج ۱)

"Let it be understood that there is no incumbency between the non-cover-worthiness of a certain part of the body and the permissibility of looking at it, because the permissibility of looking at it depends on there being no apprehension of sexual desire - although, that part of the body is not included under 'awrah (that which is coverable). For this reason, casting a look at the face of a female stranger (non-Mahram woman) or at the face of a beardless boy is forbidden when there is no doubt about the emergence of any sexual desire, although, the face is not included under *'awrah* (that which has to be hidden)." (Fatḥ-ul-Qadīr, page 181, volume 1)

From this observation of Fatḥ-ul-Qadīr, we also come to know the exact meaning of the 'apprehension of sexual desire' i.e. for all practical purposes, though there may not exist any actual desire, but one may have a reasonable apprehension that such a desire will develop by looking at the face, it will be included in the *fitnah.* When such a doubt does exist, then, it is forbidden to look not only at the face of female strangers,

rather, even at the face of beardless boys. In addition to that, another explanation of the 'apprehension of sexual desire' appears in Jami' ar-Rumuz where it is said: 'It means that one's inner self is inclined to be close to her.' It is obvious that the absence of such a degree of inclination was rare even during the time of the early forbears of Islam (*salaf*). That the Holy Prophet ﷺ, when he saw Sayyidnā Faḍl رضي الله عنه looking at a woman, had turned his face to the other side with his own blessed hands is mentioned in Ḥadīth and is a clear proof of it. So, in this age infested with all sorts of corruption, who can claim to be immune to this apprehension?

And Imām Sarakhsi, the famous Ḥanafī scholar, has concluded his detailed discussion on the issue by saying:

وَهٰذَا كُلُّه، اِذَا لَمْ يَكُنِ النَّظَرُ عَنْ شَهْوَةٍ، فَاِنْ كَانَ يَعْلَمُ اَنَّه، اِنْ نَظَرَ اشْتَهٰى لَمْ يَحِلّ لَهُ النَّظَرُ اِلٰى شَيْءٍ مِّنْهَا. (مبسوط، ص ١٥٢، ج١٠)

And all this (the permissibility of looking at the face and palms) is restricted to a situation where one does not look at a woman with sexual desire. And if the person doing it knows that his looking at the face of a woman may motivate sexual inclinations, then, it is not lawful for him to cast a look towards any part of her body. (Mabsūṭ, page 152, volume 10)

And in Kitāb-ul-Karāhiyah of Radd-ul-Muḥtār, 'Allamāh Shāmi has said:

فَاِنْ خَافَ الشَّهْوَةَ اَوْشَكَّ اِمْتَنَعَ النَّظَرُ اِلٰى وَجْهِهَا، فَحِلُّ النَّظَرِ مُقَيَّدَةٌ بِعَدَمِ الشَّهْوَةِ وَاِلاَّ فَحَرَامٌ، وَهٰذَا فِىْ زَمَانِهِمْ، وَاَمَّا فِىْ زَمَانِنَا فَمُنِعَ مِنَ الشَّابَّةِ اِلاَّ النَّظَرُ لِحَاجَةٍ كَقَاضٍ وَشَاهِدٍ يحكم وَيشهدُ وَاَيْضًا قَالَ فِىْ شُرُوْطِ الصَّلٰوةِ وَتُمْنَعُ الشَّابة مِنْ كَشْفِ الْوَجْهِ بَيْنَ رِجَالٍ لاَ لِاَنَّه، عَوْرَةٌ بَلْ لِّخَوْفِ الْفِتْنَةِ.

"If there exists an apprehension or doubt of sexual desire, looking at her will stand forbidden, because the lawfulness of looking is tied up with the absence of sexual desire, and when this condition is missing, it will be haram (forbidden) - and this is how it was during the time of the early forbears of Islam (*salaf*). But, as for our time, looking at women stands prohibited in an absolute sense - unless looking is needed for a valid reason recognized by the Sharī'ah, such as, in the case of a judge or witness who have to give a verdict or evidence." And in Shurut-us-Ṣalāh, the author has further observed, "A young

> woman is prohibited from leaving her face open before (non-Maḥram) men not because the face is included in the 'awrah, but because of the apprehension of *fitnah.*"

The gist of this debate and difference among jurists is that Imām Shafi'ī, Imām Mālik and Imām Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal, may Allah have mercy on them, have held the act of glancing at young women as prohibited absolutely, because it is usually a cause of *fitnah,* even though in a particular case it does not cause *fitnah* in actual terms. This approach has many precedents in Sharī'ah. For instance, since traveling is usually a cause of difficulties, therefore, traveling itself has been held as a 'difficulty' for allowing concessions meant for difficult situations; thus a person may enjoy all concessions in Ṣalāh and fasting etc. when traveling, even if he does not face any difficulty during his journey and finds it more comfortable than his home. Similarly, since one is unconscious while asleep and wind would pass usually, therefore, sleep itself has been taken by the Sharī'ah as passing of wind, and it is held that every sleep invalidates wudu' , whether or not wind has passed in reality.

But, Imām Abū Ḥanifah did not hold the exposure of a woman's face and palms as *fitnah* in itself. Instead of that, he subjected the prohibition to the existence of *fitnah* in actual terms. In other words, this would be a situation in which there exists the apprehension or the probability of being attracted towards the woman seeking nearness to her. If so, it would stand prohibited; where this probability does not exist, it will be permissible. But, as we already know, the absence of such probability in this time of ours is absolutely rare. Therefore, the Ḥanafi jurists of later days, too, ultimately gave the same ruling given by the other three Imāms, that is, it is prohibited to look even at the face and palms of a young woman.

Now the outcome of this presentation is that, by a consensus of the four Imāms, this third degree of Islamic legal Ḥijāb, which stipulated that a woman appears before men after having covered her whole body in a burqa' or sheet etc., but leaving her face and palms exposed, stands prohibited. Therefore, what remains now of Ḥijāb is no more than its first two degrees. One of these is the real objective, that is, women remain inside their homes and do not go out without need. The other is going out

covered with *burqa'* or sheet on the basis of need, only at a time of need and to the extent of need.

Ruling

In the injunctions of Ḥijāb mentioned above, there are some exceptions . For example, some males identified as Mahrams are exempted from Ḥijāb and very old women too are somewhat exempted from the purview of the common injunction of Ḥijāb. Some of its related detail has appeared in the commentary on Sūrah An-Nūr. (Mā'ariful-Qur'ān, volume vi) Some of it will appear later in the verses of Sūrah Al-Aḥzāb where this exemption finds mention.

In view of the importance of the issue of Ḥijāb, we have reproduced a few essential points from our treatise entitled Tafsīl-ul-Khitāb fi Aḥkam-il-Ḥijāb, something sufficient for common readers. Should someone be interested in an exhaustive treatment of the subject, it could be seen in the treatise under reference. This treatise has been published in Aḥkam-ul-Qur'ān under the section dealing with the Tafsīr of Sūrah Al-Aḥzāb. (And Allah, the Pure, the High, knows best).

Verse 56

إِنَّ اللّٰهَ وَمَلٰٓئِكَتَهٗ يُصَلُّوْنَ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ ۗ يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا صَلُّوْا عَلَيْهِ وَسَلِّمُوْا تَسْلِيْمًا ﴿٥٦﴾

Surely, Allah and His angels send blessings to the Prophet. O those who believe, do pray Allah to bless him, and send your Salām (prayer for his being in peace) to him in abundance. [56]

Commentary

In verses previous to this, some peculiarities and distinctions of the Holy Prophet ﷺ were mentioned as an adjunct to which the command to observe Ḥijāb was revealed while some injunctions of Ḥijāb will also appear later on. In between, the present verse contains a command to do something for which all these peculiarities and distinctions have been instituted in his blessed person, that is, the recognition and expression of the greatness of the station of the Holy Prophet ﷺ as well as an invitation to imbibe into one's own self the virtues of reverence, love and

obedience for him.

The real purpose of the verse was to obligate Muslims to send Ṣalāh (*durood*) and Salām upon the Holy Prophet ﷺ. But the command was given in a manner that, first of all, Allah Ta'ālā pointed out that He Himself and His angels perform the act of Ṣalāh for the Holy Prophet ﷺ. After that, common Muslims were ordered to follow suit. By doing so, it is indicated that the station of the Holy Prophet ﷺ is so high that the act asked to be done by common Muslims in his respect is something already done by Allah Ta'ālā Himself as well as angels with Him. Now then, common believers who are indebted to so many favours done to them by as their noble Prophet should certainly give high priority to making this act tneir essential concern. Then there is yet another good outcome of this modality of expression. It proves the great merit accredited to Muslims who send Ṣalāh and Salām as Allah Ta'ālā makes them share in doing what Allah Ta'ālā Himself does and so do His angels.

The Meaning of Ṣalāh (*durood*) and Salām

The word: صلوٰة (Ṣalāh) is used in the Arabic language to convey the sense of: Mercy (*raḥmah*), prayer (*du'ā'*) and praise (*madḥ* and *thanā'*). The Ṣalāh attributed to Allah Ta'ālā in the cited verse means His sending of mercy, but Ṣalāh from the angels denotes their prayer for him, and the sense of Ṣalāh (*durood*) from common believers is a combination of *du'ā'* (prayer) and *thanā'* (praise). Most commentators have given these very meanings and Imām Al-Bukhārī has reported from Abū-l-'Āliyah that the Ṣalāh of Allah Ta'ālā means the honor accorded to him and the praise showered on him before the angels. As for the honor bestowed on him by Allah Ta'ālā within this mortal world, it translates as the high rank he was blessed with when, on many an occasion, his mention was joined with the mention of Allah Ta'ālā in *adhān* (the initial call for prayers) and *iqamah* (the call announcing the immediate start of the prayer) and elsewhere, and that Allah Ta'ālā made the religion brought by him spread and prevail throughout the world, and that He enjoined upon all people to keep acting in accordance with the Sharī'ah brought by him right through the last day of al-Qiyāmah and, along with it, He has undertaken to keep his Sharī'ah stand perennially protected. Then, as for the honor bestowed upon him in the Hereafter, it can be said that his station was made to be the most exalted of the entire creation and, at a

time when no prophet or angel could dare intercede on behalf of anyone, it was right at that time that he was blessed with the celebrated station of intercession called: مقام محمود (Al-maqām-ul- maḥmūd: Praised Station).

Given the interpretation that Allah's Ṣalāh in favour of the Holy Prophet ﷺ means praise, someone may raise a doubt that, according to the narrations of Ḥadīth, Ṣalāh and Salām are also offered to the family and companions of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. If so, how can anyone other than him be made to share in the honor bestowed and praise done by Allah Ta'ālā? This doubt has been answered in Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī etc. by saying that the degrees of such honor and praise are many. The Holy Prophet ﷺ has it at its highest,while his family and companions and believers in general are included with him only to a certain degree.

As for the word: سَلَامٌ (Salām), it is an infinitive in the sense of السَّلَامَة (*as-salamah*) and means staying in peace. And اَلسَّلَامُ عَلَيْکَ (As-sala mu-'alaik: conveniently taken as 'peace on you') means: May the state of peace and security from losses, defects and calamities be with you. And since, according to the rule of Arabic grammar, this is not the occasion to use the word: عَلٰی (*'alā*: on, upon), but since the word 'Salām' implies praise, hence the word: عَلٰی (*'alā*) is appended with it.

And some other early commentators have taken the word: Salām here to mean the sacred Being of Allah Ta'ālā, because Salām is among the beautiful names of Allah Ta'ālā. According to this view the sentence will mean that Allah is enough to take care of your security and well-being.

The method of Ṣalāh and Salām

There appears a Ḥadīth in the Ṣaḥīḥ of Bukhārī and Muslim, as well as in other books of Ḥadīth, where Sayyidnā Ka'b Ibn 'Ujrah ﷺ has been reported to have said: '(When this verse was revealed), someone asked the Holy Prophet ﷺ "(The verse orders us to do two things, Ṣalāh and *salām*.) We already know the method of saying *salām*, (being اَلسَّلَامُ عَلَيْکَ اَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ that is, may peace and safety be on you. O Prophet) now tell us the method of Ṣalāh also." He said: Say these words:

اَللّٰهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلٰى مُحَمَّدٍ وَّعَلٰى اٰلِ مُحَمَّدٍ كَمَا صَلَّيْتَ عَلٰى اِبْرٰهِيْمَ وَعَلٰى اٰلِ اِبْرٰهِيْمَ اِنَّکَ حَمِيْدٌ مَّجِيْدٌ،

اَللّٰهُمَّ بَارِکْ عَلٰى مُحَمَّدٍ وَّعَلٰى اٰلِ مُحَمَّدٍ كَمَا بَارَكْتَ عَلٰى اِبْرٰهِيْمَ وَعَلٰى اٰلِ اِبْرٰهِيْمَ

اِنَّکَ حَمِیْدٌ مَّجِیْدٌ.

"O Allah, send mercy on Muḥammad and on the progeny of Muhammad, as You sent mercy on Ibrāhīm and on the progeny of Ibrāhīm. Verily, You are Praised, Glorious. O Allah, send blessings on Muḥammad and on the progeny of Muḥammad as You sent blessings on Ibrāhīm and on the progeny of Ibrāhīm. Verily, You are Praised, Glorious."

Some other words in this respect have also been reported in other narrations of Ḥadīth.

As for the reason why the noble Ṣaḥābah asked this question, perhaps it is that they had already been taught the method of offering their Salām in the تَشَہُّد : (*tashahhud* or saying of اَلتَّحِیَّات : At-tahiyyāt) where it is said: 'اَلسَّلَامُ عَلَیْکَ اَیُّھَا النَّبِیُّ وَرَحْمَةُ اللّٰهِ وَبَرَکَاتُه' (*as-salāmu 'alaika aiyuhannabiyyu wa raḥmatullāhi wa barakātuh*: Peace and safety on you, O Prophet, and the mercy of Allah and His blessings). Therefore, they did not like to determine, on their own, the precise words in the case of the saying of Ṣalāh. Instead of that, they wanted the exact words of saying the Ṣalāh to be determined by the Holy Prophet ﷺ himself. It is for this reason that صلوٰة (Ṣalāh) has generally been adopted in these very words as part of the prescribed prayers, Namāz or Ṣalāh. But, it does not mean that the obligation of sending Ṣalāh (*durud*) is restricted to these specific words, because many different forms of Ṣalāh (*durud*), have been authentically reported from the Holy Prophet ﷺ himself. The requirement of sending Ṣalāh and Salām can be fulfilled by every such sentence that has the words of Ṣalāh and Salām in it. Then, it is also not necessary that those words should have been reported exactly as said by the Holy Prophet ﷺ. In fact, the obligation may be discharged and the reward of sending Ṣalāh may be achieved by any style of address that conveys the words of Ṣalāh and Salām. But, it is obvious that the exact words reported from the Holy Prophet ﷺ are certainly much more blessed and are the cause of bringing many more rewards. It was for this very reason that the noble Ṣaḥābah had asked the Holy Prophet ﷺ himself to determine the words of صلوٰة (Ṣalāh).

In the Qa'dah (sitting position) of the prescribed prayer (Ṣalāh or Namāz), the saying of the words of Ṣalāh and Salām exactly in the manner reported above is *masnūn (per Sunnah)* right up to the last day

of Qiyāmah, (even though these words are meant to address the Holy Prophet ﷺ by saying ' Salām on you, O prophet') As for occasions outside the prescribed prayers (Ṣalāh or Namāz), these exact words should have been employed when the Holy Prophet ﷺ was addressed during his lifetime. When, after his departure from this mortal world, one has the good fortune of standing before the sacred Rawdah (the holy tomb) of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and submitting his Salām to him, then, there too, it is *masnūn* to employ the form of second person: اَلسَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ (*as-salamu 'alaik*). Other than that, wherever Ṣalāh and Salām is recited in absentia, then, the use of the third person form has been reported from the Ṣaḥābah, Tabi'in and the Imāms of the Muslim Ummah - for example: ... (*sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam* i.e.May Allah send mercy and peace to him.- as fully demonstrated by books of Ḥadīth at large.

The wisdom behind the aforesaid method of Ṣalāh and Salām

The outcome of the method of Ṣalāh and Salām which stands proved from the blessed words spoken by him and demonstrated practically through his deeds is no other but that all of us in the Muslim Ummah should pray to Allah Ta'ālā for mercy, peace and safety for him. At this point, a question is worth noting. Is it not that the verse required us to personally fulfill the right of the Holy Prophet ﷺ that he be revered and honored, but the method proposed was that we pray to Allah? Embedded here is the hint that fulfilling the due right of honoring and obeying the Holy Prophet ﷺ was not within the power and control of any of us, therefore, it was made mandatory for us that we should supplicate before Allah Ta'ālā. (Rūḥ-ul- Ma'ānī)

The injunctions of Ṣalāh and Salām

In the last *Qa'dah* (sitting position) of the prescribed prayers, (*namāz* or Ṣalāh), the saying of درود شریف (Ṣalāh, that is, the noble *durūd*) is Sunnah Mu'akkadah (emphasized Sunnah) according to the majority of the Imāms. But, with Imām Shafi'ī and Imām Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal, it is *wājib* (necessary). If abandoned, it becomes necessary,according to them, to make *namāz* or Ṣalāh all over again.

Related Rulings

1. When someone mentions the name of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, or hears someone mentioning it, reciting the words of sending Ṣalāh (the noble *durūd*) becomes *wājib* (obligatory) on him or her. This is a point of

consensus among the majority of Muslim jurists. The reason is that there are warnings in Ḥadīth against not reciting the noble durud when his blessed name is being referred. According to Jami' of Tirmidhī, the Holy Prophet ﷺ said: رَغِمَ اَنْفُ رَجُلٍ ذُكِرْتُ عِنْدَه، فَلَمْ يُصَلِّ عَلَيَّ : "Disgraced is the man before whom I am mentioned, yet he does not send Ṣalāh (Durūd) on me". (Tirmidhī calls this Ḥadīth 'Ḥasan', and Ibn-us- Sunni reports it with strong authorities).

And in another Ḥadīth it has been said: اَلْبَخِيلُ مَنْ ذُكِرْتُ عِنْدَه، فَلَمْ يُصَلِّ عَلَيَّ "A miser is he before whom I am mentioned yet he does not send Ṣalāh (Durūd) on me". (reported by Tirmidhī who rated it as 'Ḥasan Ṣaḥīḥ').

2. If his blessed mention is made repeatedly in a single sitting, reciting the Ṣalāh (Durūd) only once may discharge the obligation. But, the desirable (*mustaḥabb*) thing is to recite the noble Durud every time one makes his blessed mention himself, or hears someone else make it. Who can claim to mention the name of the Holy Prophet ﷺ more frequently than the scholars of the Ḥadīth? Their function is nothing but to narrate the aḥādīth of the Holy Prophet ﷺ in which they have to mention his name repeatedly. Still, their consistent practice was to recite or write the Ṣalāh each and every time. All books of Ḥadīth bear testimony to this fact. In doing so, they never bothered about this incidence of repetition of Ṣalāh and Salām which would increase the volume of the book in a sizable measure, because fairly often, there come very short aḥadīth in which his blessed name finds mention after every one or two lines - and at places, it appears more than once within one single line - still, these respected scholars and experts of Ḥadīth never abandon or ignore Ṣalāh and Salām anywhere.

3. The way it is Wājib (necessary) to say Ṣalāh and Salām vocally at the time one makes his blessed mention verbally, similarly, it is also wajib to write Ṣalāh and Salām with the pen when one uses it at the time of writing. In this case, there are people who would abbreviate its words and get away by writing صلعم (of which, "SAW" is a counterpart). This is not enough. One should write the full Ṣalāh and Salām (that is: صلى الله عليه وسلم : Ṣallallāhu 'alaihi wa sallam).

4. At the time his blessed mention is being made, the better, higher and more desirable choice is no other but that both Ṣalāh and Salām be

recited and written. But, should someone take one of these, that is, only Ṣalāh or only Salām, as sufficient, then, it is no sin in the sight of the majority of Muslim jurists. Shaykh-ul-Islām Nawawī and others have declared it as *makrūh* (reprehensible) to take only one as sufficient. Ibn Ḥajar Al-Haithami said that by Karāhah (reprehensibility) they mean its being Khilāf-ul-awla (contrary to the preferred choice) which is known as *Makrūh Tanzīhī* (not desirable). And the consistent practice of the *'ulama'* of the Muslim Ummah bears testimony to the fact that they invariably put these together while, on some occasions, they would go by only one as well.

5. Using the word: صلوٰة (Ṣalāh) for anyone other than prophets عليهم السلام is not permissible in the sight of the majority of 'Ulama'. In his Sunan, Imām Baihaqi has reported the *fatwā* of Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ as follows: لَايُصَلّٰى عَلٰى اَحَدٍ اِلاَّ عَلَى النَّبِي صَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ لٰكِنْ يدعىٰ لِلْمُسْلِمِيْنَ وَالْمُسْلِمٰتِ بِالْاِسْتِغْفَارِ (Ṣalāh is not sent upon any one except the Holy Prophet ﷺ but prayer is made for Muslim men and Muslim women to seek forgiveness for them.)

With Imām Shafi'ī, using the word: صَلوٰة (Ṣalāh) for any one other than a prophet is perennially Makrūh (reprehensible, repugnant). Imām Abū Ḥanifah and his pupils also hold the same view. However, it is permissible that after saying Ṣalāh for the Holy Prophet, some other people are also included in the same sentence, like his family members ('Āl), Companions and all believers.

And Imām Juwaini said that the rule about the word: صَلوٰة (Ṣalāh) is the same as the rule about the word: سَلَام (Salām), since it is not correct to use it for someone other than a prophet - except that one says اَلسَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ (*as-salamu-'alaikum*) as a greeting while addressing someone. This is permissible, and Masnūn. But, saying or writing: عليه السلام (*'alaihissalām*) with the name of someone absent is not correct in the case of someone other than a prophet (Al-khaṣā'is-ul-kubrā, by Suyūṭī, v.2, p. 262)

'Allāmah Liqa'ī has quoted Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ saying: Major authentic scholars of the Muslim Ummah have gone by this view, and this is the view of Imām Mālik, Sufyān and many Muslim jurists who hold that its use is not permissible for anyone other than a prophet. This is similar to the case of the use of اللّٰه سُبْحَانَه وتعالىٰ (*Subḥanahū wa Ta'ālā*) which is

particular to Almighty Allah. Thus, in the case of common Muslims - with the exception of prophets - there should be a prayer for forgiveness and pleasure from Allah. This is as it appears in the Qur'ān: رَضِيَ اللّٰهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوْا عَنْهُ (Allah is pleased with them and they are pleased with Him - 5:119, 9:100, 28:22, 98:8). (Rūḥ-ul- Ma'ānī)

A detailed discussion about the injunctions of Ṣalāh and Salām appears in the treatise *Tanqīḥ-ul-kalām fī Aḥkām-is-Ṣalāh was-salām* written by this humble author. It was published as part of the commentary on Sūrah Al-Aḥzāb in the major work Aḥkām-ul- Qur'ān in Arabic.

Verses 57 - 58

إِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ يُؤْذُوْنَ اللّٰهَ وَرَسُوْلَهٗ لَعَنَهُمُ اللّٰهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْاٰخِرَةِ
وَاَعَدَّلَهُمْ عَذَابًا مُّهِيْنًا ﴿٥٧﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ يُؤْذُوْنَ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ وَالْمُؤْمِنٰتِ
بِغَيْرِ مَا اكْتَسَبُوْا فَقَدِ احْتَمَلُوْا بُهْتَانًا وَّاِثْمًا مُّبِيْنًا ﴿٥٨﴾

Surely, those who annoy Allah and His Messenger are cursed by Allah in this world and the Hereafter, and He has prepared for them a humiliating punishment. [57] **And those who hurt believing men and believing women without their having done anything (wrong), they shall bear the burden of slander and a manifest sin.** [58]

Commentary

In the previous verses, Muslims were warned against doing what caused pain to the Holy Prophet ﷺ. But, some Muslims used to get involved into doing such things unintentionally simply because of their lack of knowledge or attention. For example, walking into his living quarters without having been invited or, in the event of an invitation to eat at the house, coming in and sitting there much earlier than the time set for it or, once the meals were over, just keep hanging at the house talking to each other and keep delaying their due departure. Upon this, a warning has been served in the verse: يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا لَا تَدْخُلُوْا بُيُوْتَ النَّبِيِّ (O those who believe, do not enter the houses of the Prophet - 33:53). This was the pain caused to the Holy Prophet ﷺ without any volition or intention, simply by negligence. On this, only a warning was considered sufficient.

Mentioned in the two verses cited above is the pain that was caused to him intentionally by the disbelievers and hypocrites. It is for this reason that Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thanāvī has parenthetically added the word: قصدًا (*qaṣdan*: intentionally) at this place in his abridged summary which includes many a physical pain caused to him at the hands of disbelievers on different occasions as well as the emotional ones that were caused to him in the form of taunts and insults and false accusations against his blessed wives. The cited verses also gives a warning of Divine curse and punishment to those who cause such pains to him by intention.

Although, in the beginning of the verse, warning is given to those who cause pain to Allah (Surely, those who cause pain to Allah... 33:57), while Allah Ta'ālā is beyond any effect or impression, and no one can cause pain to Him in real terms, yet the deeds that usually cause pain to others have been referred to as 'causing pain to Allah.'

Leading authorities of Tafsīr, however, differ in defining the acts that are termed here as 'causing pain to Allah'. Some of them have maintained that these are the words and deeds about which it has been specifically declared in the spoken aḥādīth of the Holy Prophet ﷺ that they cause pain to Allah Ta'ālā. For example, it is mentioned in a Ḥadīth that those who curse the 'time' cause pain to Allah.The background of this Ḥadīth is that the people in the days of ignorance used to blame the 'time' for all sorts of accidents and sufferings, because they believed that the 'time' is the real cause of all happenings in this world. Therefore whenever they faced a suffering, they used to curse and hurl abuses to the 'time', while in fact the real doer of all acts is none but Allah Ta'ālā, and in this context their curse and abuses would turn to Him. It is therefore mentioned in the of Divine curse and punishment Ḥadīth that this behavior causes pain to Allah Ta'ālā. Moreover, as it appears in Ḥadīth narrations, making pictures of living creatures cause pain to Allah Ta'ālā. the expression of 'causing pain to Allah' would be referring to these very words and deeds.

And other authorities of Tafsīr said that the real purpose at this place is to warn against causing pain to the Holy Prophet ﷺ . But, it has been termed in the verse as causing pain to Allah Ta'ālā, because causing pain to the Prophet ﷺ is tantamount to causing pain to Allah Ta'ālā Himself. This interpretation is supported by the context of the Qur'ān, because it is the subject of causing pain to the Holy Prophet ﷺ that was mentioned in

the text earlier and the same subject is repeated again in the forthcoming words. And that the pain caused to the Holy Prophet ﷺ turns out to be pain for Allah Ta'ālā stands proved from the narration of Sayyidnā 'Abdur-Raḥmān Ibn Mughaffal al-Muzanī رضي الله عنه given below:

قَالَ رَسُوْلُ اللّٰهِ صَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: اَللّٰهَ اَللّٰهَ فِيْ اَصْحَابِيْ لَاتَتَّخِذُوْهُمْ غَرَضًا مِنْ بَعْدِيْ فَمَنْ اَحَبَّهُمْ فَبِحُبِّيْ اَحَبَّهُمْ وَمَنْ اَبْغَضَهُمْ فَبِبُغْضِيْ اَبْغَضَهُمْ وَمَنْ اٰذٰهُمْ فَقَدْ اٰذَانِيْ وَمَنْ اٰذَانِيْ فَقَدْ اٰذَى اللّٰهَ وَمَنْ اٰذَى اللّٰهَ يُوْشِكُ اَنْ يَّاْخُذَ (ترمذی)

The Holy Prophet ﷺ said: "Fear Allah, fear Allah in the matter of my Companions. Do not make them the target of your objections and criticisms because whoever loves them loves them because of his love for me, and whoever dislikes them dislikes them because of his disliking against me, and whoever caused pain to them has definitely caused pain to me and whoever caused pain to me has definitely caused pain to Allah, and whoever caused pain to Allah, it is likely that he will be seized by Him.- (Tirmidhī)

Just as this Ḥadīth tells us that the pain inflicted on the Holy Prophet ﷺ causes pain to Allah Ta'ālā, very similarly, it also tells us that inflicting pain on any of the noble Companions or being audacious enough as to speak ill of them becomes pain caused to the Holy Prophet ﷺ.

There are several narrations relating to the background in which this verse was revealed. According to some of these, it was revealed about the false accusation made against Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضی اللہ عنہا. For example, a narration from Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه says: When false accusation was made against Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضی اللہ عنہا, some people gathered at the home of the hypocrite, 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Ubayy and indulged in the conspiracy of giving currency to this false accusation. At that time, the Holy Prophet ﷺ complained before his noble Companions saying that the man was causing pain to him - (Maẓharī).

According to some other narrations, this verse was revealed when some hypocrites had thrown taunts at the time of the marriage of Sayyidah Ṣafiyyah رضی اللہ عنہا. However, the the fact of the matter is that this verse has been revealed concerning each such case which caused pain to the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Thus, included here is the false accusation made against Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضی اللہ عنہا, the taunts thrown by the

hypocrites on the occasion of the marriages of Sayyidah Safiyyah and Zainab رضی اللہ عنہا as well as calling other noble Companions bad, passing ill remarks against them or maligning them in any other way, public or private تبرّاء (*tabarrā'*).

Causing pain to the Holy Prophet ﷺ in any form or manner is kufr (infidelity)

Ruling

A person who inflicts any pain on the Holy Prophet ﷺ, suggests any fault in his person or attributes, whether expressly or in an implied manner, becomes a *kāfir* - and according to this verse (57), the curse of Allah Ta'ālā will be upon him in this world as well as in the Hereafter. (As stated by *Qāḍī Thanā'ullah in at-Tafsīr al-Maẓharī*).

The second verse has declared that causing pain to any believer is also forbidden (*ḥarām*) as being a grave sin a manifest slander, but in the case of common believers the prohibition of causing pain is subjected to a condition that they should not have deserved it by committing a wrongful act. This is because, in their case it is possible that they have done something as a consequence of which causing pain to them is permissible under the dictates of the Sharī'ah, while in the case of the Allah and the Holy Prophet ﷺ it is simply impossible that causing pain to Allah and His Messenger may be justified on any ground. Therefore, no such condition is mentioned in verse 57.

Hurting or causing pain to any Muslim without a valid Islamic legal justification is forbidden (Ḥarām)

It stands proved from the cited verse (58): اَلَّذِيْنَ يُؤْذُوْنَ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ (And those who hurt believing men and believing women without their having done anything (wrong), they shall bear the burden of slander and a manifest sin.) that it is forbidden (Ḥarām) to cause any pain, harm or hurt any Muslim without a justification recognized by Sharī'ah. The Holy Prophet ﷺ has said:

اَلْمُسْلِمُ مَنْ سَلِمَ الْمُسْلِمُوْنَ مِنْ لِّسَانِهٖ وَيَدِهٖ وَالْمُؤْمِنُ مَنْ اَمِنَهُ النَّاسُ عَلٰى دِمَآئِهِمْ وَاَمْوَالِهِمْ، رواه الترمذی عن ابی ہریرۃؓ (مظہری)

A (true) Muslim is the one from whose tongue and hands all Muslims remain unharmed and safe. And a (true) *mu'min* (believer) is the one

from whom people remain unaffected and safe in the matter of their lives (lit., bloods) and their properties (being his or her duty to ensure that so these do) - reported by Tirmidhī from Sayyidnā Abu Hurairah ﵁. (Maẓharī)

Verses 59 - 62

يٰۤاَيُّهَا النَّبِىُّ قُلْ لِّاَزْوَاجِكَ وَبَنٰتِكَ وَنِسَآءِ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ يُدْنِيْنَ عَلَيْهِنَّ
مِنْ جَلَابِيْبِهِنَّ ؕ ذٰلِكَ اَدْنٰۤى اَنْ يُّعْرَفْنَ فَلَا يُؤْذَيْنَ ؕ وَكَانَ اللّٰهُ غَفُوْرًا
رَّحِيْمًا ﴿٥٩﴾ لَئِنْ لَّمْ يَنْتَهِ الْمُنٰفِقُوْنَ وَالَّذِيْنَ فِىْ قُلُوْبِهِمْ مَّرَضٌ
وَّالْمُرْجِفُوْنَ فِى الْمَدِيْنَةِ لَنُغْرِيَنَّكَ بِهِمْ ثُمَّ لَا يُجَاوِرُوْنَكَ فِيْهَآ اِلَّا
قَلِيْلًا ﴿٦٠﴾ مَّلْعُوْنِيْنَ ۚ اَيْنَمَا ثُقِفُوْۤا اُخِذُوْا وَقُتِّلُوْا تَقْتِيْلًا ﴿٦١﴾ سُنَّةَ
اللّٰهِ فِى الَّذِيْنَ خَلَوْا مِنْ قَبْلُ ۚ وَلَنْ تَجِدَ لِسُنَّةِ اللّٰهِ تَبْدِيْلًا ﴿٦٢﴾

O prophet, tell your wives and your daughters and the women of the believers that they should draw down their shawls over them. That will make it more likely that they are recognized, hence not teased. And Allah is Most-Forgiving, Very-Merciful. [59] **If the hypocrites and those having malady in their hearts and the ones who spread rumors in Madinah do not stop (their evil deeds), We will certainly stir you up against them, then they shall no longer live in it as your neighbors, but for a little while,** [60] **(and that too in a state of being) accursed. Wherever they are found, they shall be seized, and shall be killed thoroughly.** [61] **– a consistent practice of Allah in the matter of those who have gone before. And you will never find a change in Allah's consistent practice.** [62]

Commentary

The previous verses have maintained that causing pain to any Muslim, man or woman, is forbidden and is a major sin, and in particular, inflicting pain on the Holy Prophet ﷺ is an act of infidelity, liable to Allah's curse. Now, there were two kinds of pain caused by the hypocrites to all Muslims and to the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Preventive measures against these have been provided in the verses cited above. As a corollary, stated

there are a few additional injunctions in a certain congruity to be unfolded later on. One of these two kinds of pain caused was at the hands of vagabonds from among the general run of hypocrites who used to molest bondwomen from Muslim homes when they came out to take care of family chores. Then on occasions, they would mistreat free women under the impression that they were bondwomen because of which pain was caused to Muslims at large and to the Holy Prophet ﷺ.

On the other hand, the Sharī'ah of Islam has maintained a difference between free women and bondwomen in the matter of Ḥijāb. The limits of Ḥijāb prescribed for bondwomen are the limits observed by the free women before their *maḥrams* (marriage with whom is forbidden), for example, as leaving the face open before their *maḥrams* is permissible for free women, the same was permissible for bondwomen even when they went out of their homes, because their very job was to serve their masters, an occupation that took them out of the home repeatedly which made it difficult for them to keep their face and hands hidden. This is contrary to the case of free women who, even if they have to go out for some need, would be doing so rarely, an eventuality in which the observance of full Ḥijāb should not be difficult. Therefore, the command given to free women was that the long sheet with which they cover themselves when going out should be pulled from over their head downwards before their face, so that it does not get exposed before male strangers. Two things were accomplished thereby. It made their own Ḥijāb come out perfect while covering their faces served another purpose of distinguishing them from bondwomen, because of which they automatically became safe from being teased by wicked people. As for the arrangements made to keep bondwomen protected, the hypocrites were served with a warning to the effect that, should they fail to abstain from their low behavior, (the torment of the Hereafter aside) Allah Ta'ālā would have them punished at the hands of His Prophet and Muslims in this world as well.

The words used in the command about the Ḥijāb of free women in the verse under study (59) appear as follows: يُدْنِيْنَ عَلَيْهِنَّ مِنْ جَلَابِيْبِهِنَّ in which the word: يُدْنِيْنَ (*yudnīna*) has been derived from: إِدْنَا (*idnā'*) which literally means to draw, pull or make come closer. The second word: عَلَيْهِنَّ (*'alaihinn*) means 'on' or 'over themselves' (hanging as a screen for the face). The third word: جَلَابِيْب (*jalābīb*) in: جِلْبَاب (*jalābībihinn*) is the plural

form of: جِلْبَاب (*jilbāb*) which is the name of a particular long sheet. Sayyidnā Ibn Mas'ūd ﷺ identified the form of this sheet as the one that is worn over the scarf (Ibn Kathīr) and Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ described its form in the words given below:

اَمَرَ اللّٰهُ نِسَآءَ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ اِذَا خَرَجْنَ مِنْ بُيُوْتِهِنَّ فِيْ حَاجَةٍ اَنْ يُّغَطِّيْنَ وُجُوْهَهُنَّ مِنْ فَوْقِ رُؤُسِهِنَّ بِالْجَلَابِيْبِ وَيُبْدِيْنَ عَيْنًا وَاحِدَةً (ابن كثير)

"Allah Ta'ālā commanded women of the believers that, when they go out of their homes to take care of some need, they hide their faces with the long sheet (hanging down) from over their heads leaving only one eye open (to see the way)." - (Ibn Kathīr)

And Imām Muḥammad Ibn Sirin says: 'When I asked 'Ubaidah Salmānī ﷺ about the meaning of this verse and the nature of Ḥijāb, he demonstrated it by hiding his face with the long sheet pulled from the top of his head and left to hang in front of it - and thus, by keeping only his left eye open to see, he explained the words: *idnā'*: (bring close) and: *jilbāb* (long sheet or shawl) practically .'

'To have the long sheet come from over the head and hand on, or in front of, the face' which appears in the statement of Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ and 'Ubaidah Salmani رحم الله تعالى is the explanation (Tafsīr) of the Qur'ānic word: عَلَيْهِنَّ ('*alaihinn*: over them), that is, the sense of bringing the sheet close over them is to let the sheet come from over the head and hang on, or in front of, the face.

This verse commands the hiding of the face with ample clarity which comprehensively supports what has been stated under the commentary on the first verse of Ḥijāb appearing earlier. There it was said that, though the face and the palms of the hands are not included under satr as such but, under the apprehension of *fitnah*, hiding these too is necessary. Only situations of compulsion stand exempted.

A necessary point of clarification

This verse instructs free women to observe Ḥijāb in a particular manner, that is, they should hide their face by bringing the sheet from over the head to hang on, or in front of, the face so that they could be recognized as distinct from bondwomen in general, and thus could stay protected from the *fitnah* of wicked people. The statement referred to immediately earlier has already made it very clear that it never means

that Islam has allowed some difference to exist between free women and bondwomen in the matter of providing protection to the chastity and honor, and has protected free women and left bondwomen (to fend for themselves). Instead, the truth of the matter is that this difference was made by these wicked and low people themselves, as they simply did not dare act high-handedly against free women, but chose to tease bondwomen. The Sharī'ah of Islam took a functional advantage from this difference put into practice by them by ordering the free women to distinguish themselves, so that the majority of women becomes automatically protected through their own standing conduct in this matter. As far as the matter of bondwomen is concerned, the protection of their chastity and honor is as much necessary in Islam as that of free women. But, it could not be carried out except by using the legal authority. So, the next verse spells out that those who violate the law will not be forgiven - in fact, as and where they are found, they will be caught and killed. This is what provided a security shield for the chastity and honor of bondwomen as well.

This submission makes it clear that the interpretation offered in this verse by 'Allāmah Ibn Ḥazm and others - as different from the majority of scholars and in an effort to escape the doubt mentioned above - is something just no necessary. A doubt could have come up only when no arrangement was made for the protection of bondwomen.

A person who turns an apostate (*murtadd*) after having embraced Islam is killed in punishment

Two mischiefs made by the hypocrites have been mentioned in the cited verse and it has been said that should they fail to abstain from indulging in these any further, the punishment they shall face will be: مَلْعُونِينَ أَيْنَمَا ثُقِفُوٓا۟ أُخِذُوا۟ وَقُتِّلُوا۟ تَقْتِيلًا (Wherever they are found, they shall be seized, and shall be killed thoroughly - 61). This punishment is not meant for disbelievers at large. Numerous textual authorities from the Qur'ān and Sunnah bear it out that this is not the law of the Sharī'ah of Islam for disbelievers. In fact, the law is that they should first be invited to embrace Islam along with sincere efforts to remove any doubts they may have. If, even then, they elect not to enter the fold of Islam, they should be asked to live as Dhimmī subjects of the Muslim state. If they accept that, the protection of their life, property and honor becomes obligatory on Muslims very much like that of Muslims themselves. Yes, if there are

those who do not accept this too, and choose the option of fighting, then, the command is to fight back against them.

The reason why this punishment to seize and kill them has been awarded in an absolute sense in the present verse is because this matter related to the hypocrites who used to call themselves Muslims - and when a Muslim starts demonstrating open hostility to and denial of Islam, such a person is called: *Murtadd:* apostate) in the terminology of the Sharī'ah. With such a man, there is no compromise in the Sharī'ah of Islam - except that he repents and reverts to Islam and accepts the injunctions of Islam in word and deed. Otherwise, this person will be killed as it stands proved from clear statements of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and the collective practice of the noble Ṣaḥābah. The Jihād waged against the Liar Musaylimah and his cohorts with the collective approval of the Ṣaḥābah and the consequent killing of Musaylimah is sufficient as its proof. Then, in the last verse as well (62), this has been cited as the customary law and practice of Allah Ta'ālā which tells us that the punishment of an apostate (*murtadd*) in the religious laws of past prophets was no other but killing.

Some Rulings:

This verse proves that:

(1) When women have to go out of the house to take care of some need, they should go with their whole body covered with a long sheet and walk face-hidden with this sheet brought from over the head to hang on, or in front of, the face. The common '*burqa*' also serves the same purpose.

(2) Spreading rumors among Muslims that subject them to anxiety or worry or cause harm is *ḥarām* (forbidden, unlawful).

Verses 63 - 68

يَسْـَٔلُكَ النَّاسُ عَنِ السَّاعَةِ ؕ قُلْ اِنَّمَا عِلْمُهَا عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ ؕ وَمَا يُدْرِيْكَ
لَعَلَّ السَّاعَةَ تَكُوْنُ قَرِيْبًا ﴿٦٣﴾ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَعَنَ الْكٰفِرِيْنَ وَاَعَدَّلَهُمْ
سَعِيْرًا ﴿٦٤﴾ خٰلِدِيْنَ فِيْهَآ اَبَدًا ۚ لَايَجِدُوْنَ وَلِيًّا وَّلَا نَصِيْرًا ﴿٦٥﴾
يَوْمَ تُقَلَّبُ وُجُوْهُهُمْ فِى النَّارِ يَقُوْلُوْنَ يٰلَيْتَنَآ اَطَعْنَا اللّٰهَ وَاَطَعْنَا
الرَّسُوْلَا ﴿٦٦﴾ وَقَالُوْا رَبَّنَآ اِنَّآ اَطَعْنَا سَادَتَنَا وَكُبَرَآءَنَا فَاَضَلُّوْنَا

السَّبِيلَا ﴿٦٧﴾ رَبَّنَآ اٰتِهِمْ ضِعْفَيْنِ مِنَ الْعَذَابِ وَالْعَنْهُمْ لَعْنًا كَبِيرًا
ع
﴿٦٨﴾

People ask you about the Hour (i.e.the Day of Judgment). Say," Its knowledge is only with Allah." And what can let you know? It may be that the Hour is near. [63]

Surely, Allah has cursed the infidels, and has prepared for them a flaming fire, [64] **wherein they will live for ever, finding no one to protect or to help.** [65] **The Day their faces will be rolled in the fire, they will say, " Oh, would that we had obeyed Allah and obeyed the Messenger !".** [66] **And they will say, " Our Lord, we obeyed our chiefs and our elders, and they made us go astray from the path.** [67] **Our Lord, give them twice the punishment, and send a curse on them, an enormous curse.** [68]

Commentary

Those hostile to Allah and the Messenger were warned of and alerted to curse and punishment in the present world and in the Hereafter while many factions among the disbelievers, in their own place, simply denied the eventuality of any Qiyāmah (Doomsday) or 'Ākhirah (Hereafter) and, because of their denial, used to mockingly ask: When would that Qiyāmah come? An answer to their question has been given in the cited verse, that the Doomsday may be in near future. It has been said so because nobody knows the exact date of the Doomsday, and therefore everyone should be prepared for it as if it were very close. Another reason for its being declared as close is that after facing the horrible incidents of Qiyāmah the entire worldly life of thousands of years will seem to be very short (and the Qiyāmah very close to it).

Verses 69 - 71

يَآأَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا لَاتَكُوْنُوْا كَالَّذِيْنَ اٰذَوْا مُوْسٰى فَبَرَّاَهُ اللّٰهُ مِمَّا
قَالُوْا ط وَكَانَ عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ وَجِيْهًا ﴿٦٩﴾ يَآأَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ
وَقُوْلُوْا قَوْلًا سَدِيْدًا ﴿٧٠﴾ يُّصْلِحْ لَكُمْ اَعْمَالَكُمْ وَيَغْفِرْلَكُمْ

ذُنُوبَكُمْ ۗ وَمَن يُطِعِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَقَدْ فَازَ فَوْزًا عَظِيمًا ﴿٧١﴾

O those who believe, do not be like those who caused pain to Musa, then Allah cleared him of what they said. And he was honorable in the sight of Allah. [69] **O those who believe, fear Allah, and speak what is straight forward.** [70] **Allah will correct your deeds for your benefit, and forgive for you your sins. And whoever obeys Allah and His Messenger achieves a great success.** [71]

Commentary

That causing pain to Allah and His Messenger brings fatal consequences was the subject of the previous verse. The present verse instructs Muslims that they should particularly guard against falling into any stance of hostility to Allah and His Messenger because it causes pain to them.

In the first verse (69), by mentioning an event relating to Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام, an event in which his people had caused pain to him, Muslims have been warned that they should never do something like that. From this, it does not necessarily follow that Muslims may have actually done so. Instead of that, by relating this incident, they have been forewarned as a matter of precaution. As for the incident of some Ṣaḥābah reported in a narration, it is likely that they would have not realized at that time that the word being said would cause pain to the Holy Prophet ﷺ. That a Ṣaḥābī would intentionally cause pain to the Holy Prophet ﷺ is not possible. Whatever incidents of intentional causing of pain there are, they all relate to hypocrites. Then, by citing the incident relating to Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام, the Holy Prophet ﷺ has himself explained the meaning of this verse as it has been reported by Imām al-Bukhārī from Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ﷺ in Kitabut-Tafsīr and Kitabul-Anbiya'. There it is said that Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام was a man of modesty and very particular in keeping his body properly covered. No one had the occasion to see his body uncovered. Whenever he needed a bath, he would take it inside a screened place. Conversely, his people, the Bani Isrā'il, had a common custom of their own. Among them, men would bathe naked before everybody. So, some of them started saying that the reason why Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام would not take a bath before anyone is that he had

some defect in his body, either leprosy or enlarged testicles or some other evil-fated deformity because of which he preferred to remain hidden. Allah Ta'ālā willed that Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام be cleared from the attribution of such defects. On a certain day, Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام went in for a bath in private while he put off his clothes and placed these on a rock. When done with his bath, he moved to pick up his clothes from the rock. At that time, this rock (moving under Divine command) started running away. Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام, with his staff in hand, went after the rock saying: ثَوْبِی حَجَرُ ثَوْبِی حَجَرُ (O rock, my clothes! O rock, my clothes!). But the rock kept moving until it stopped at a place crowded with the people of Banī Isrā'il. At that time, when the Banī Isrā'il saw Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام undressed from the head to the feet, they saw a body that was perfect (having no defect attributed by them). Thus, Allah Ta'ālā made it clear before everyone that Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام was free from these supposed defects. The rock had stopped at this place. Once Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام had picked up his clothes and put these on, he started beating up the rock with his staff. "By Allah," said the Holy Prophet ﷺ "the strikes of Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام against the rock left some three or four or five traces on it!"

After having recounted this event, the Holy Prophet ﷺ said: This is what this verse of the Qur'ān means, that is, the verse under study: كَالَّذِيْنَ اٰذَوْا مُوْسٰى (Like those who caused pain to Mūsā.. - 33:69). The explanation of the pain caused to Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام in this incident has been reported from the Holy Prophet ﷺ himself. There is yet another story relating to the pain caused to Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام reported from the noble Ṣaḥābah which is also necessarily appended to it. But, the weightier Tafsīr or explanation is the the one that is present in the Ḥadīth reported from the Holy Prophet ﷺ himself.

At the end of verse 69, it was said: وَكَانَ عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ وَجِيْهًا (And he was honorable in the sight of Allah). The Arabic word used for Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام *wajih* denotes the honor and elegance of someone who deserves regard and consideration. When used with: *'indallāh*: in the sight of Allah), it would mean a person whose prayer is answered by Allah Ta'ālā and whose wish He does not turn down. Hence, the station of Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام as a person whose prayers were answered (popularly known as: *mustajab-ud-da'awāt*) is proved from many events mentioned in the

Qur'ān where he prayed to Allah for something and He answered it the way he wanted it to be. Most unique of these is the prayer he made about Sayyidnā Hārūn (Aaron) عليه السلام where he wished that he be made a prophet. Allah Ta'ālā accepted his prayer and made him a co-prophet with Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام - although, the high office of prophethood is not given to someone on someone's recommendation. (Ibn Kathīr)

Customarily, Allah Ta'ālā keeps prophets free from physical defects causing aversion

In this event, Allah Ta'ālā has demonstrated such unusual concern to have Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام absolved of the blame imputed to him by his people which took no less than a miracle whereby a rock ran away with Sayyidnā Mūsā's clothes and he, compelled by circumstances beyond his control, came out undressed before the people. This extra-ordinary care shown by Allah Ta'ālā to free his prophet from this blame points out to the fact that Allah Ta'ālā keeps even the bodies of His prophets generally free and pure from defects that appear repulsive and undignified - as it stands proved from the Ḥadīth of Bukhārī that all prophets are lineally high-born. The reason is that it would be hard to agree to listen to, accept and follow someone from the line and family regarded by people as customarily low. Similarly, the history of prophets does not bear out that any prophet was blind, deaf, dumb or handicapped. As for the case of Sayyidnā Ayyūb عليه السلام, it cannot be used to raise any objection, for what happened to him was the dictate of Divine wisdom, a particular trial, a temporary discomfort which was eliminated later on. Allah knows best.

يَاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ وَقُوْلُوْا قَوْلًا سَدِيْدًا ﴿۷۰﴾ يُّصْلِحْ لَكُمْ اَعْمَالَكُمْ وَيَغْفِرْلَكُمْ ذُنُوْبَكُمْ

O those who believe, fear Allah, and speak what is straight forward. Allah will correct your deeds for your benefit, and forgive for you your sins. (33:70-71)

The original word used in the text for "what is straight forward" is '*sadīd*' which has been explained by some exegetes as what is the truth. Others explain it as straight, while still others, as correct. Quoting all of these, Ibn Kathīr calls all these true (on the beam hitting the target). The Holy Qur'ān has chosen this word, instead of *ṣādiq* or *mustaqīm*, because the present word holds all these attributes of ideal speech within itself. It

was for this reason that Kāshifī said in Rūḥ-ul-Bayān: *Qawl Sadīd* is the saying of what is true having no trace of falsity; correct having no trace of error, right thing being no joke or fun; spoken softly, not harshly.

Correct use of one's power of speech is an effective source of correcting all deeds issuing forth from other parts of the body

The basic command given to all Muslims in this verse is: اِتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ (Take to *taqwa*, that is, fear Allah and act accordingly). The reality of *taqwā* lies in one's total obedience to all Divine injunctions whereby one carries out everything enjoined and abstains from everything declared prohibited and repugnant. And it is obvious that doing so is no easy task for human beings. Therefore, immediately after the main guideline of اِتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ. (*ittaqullāh*: Fear Allah and act accordingly), there appears an instruction to start doing something particular, that is, the correction and reform of one's speech. Though, this too is nothing but a part of *taqwa* itself, yet it is one such part of it that, should this thing come under control, all other remaining components of the comprehensive requirement of *taqwā* would start becoming achievable automatically, as the verse itself has promised that, as a result of one's making his or her speech truthful and straight, Allah will correct his deeds. In other words it means that, 'should you succeed in holding your tongue and avoiding errors of speech and get used to saying what is correct, straight and right, Allah Ta'ālā will correct every other deed you do and make all of them better.' Then, concluding the verse, another promise was made and it was said: يُصْلِحْ لَكُمْ اَعْمَالَكُمْ (and He will forgive for you your sins). It means: 'One who gains control over his tongue, learns to harness his or her power of speech and becomes used to saying what is true and right, then, Allah Ta'ālā will take care of the rest of his or her deeds, have them corrected and made better as well as forgive any errors or slips made therein.'

Injunctions of the Qur'ān were made easy to follow

Deliberation in the general style of the noble Qur'ān shows that at a place where acting upon a Qurā'nic injunction seems to be difficult, a method has also been suggested along with it to make it easy. And since *taqwā* is the essence of the entire religion of Islam and fulfilling its dictates on all counts is very hard indeed, therefore, speaking generally, wherever the command to observe *taqwā* (*'ittaqullāh'*) has been given, there appears soon after, the suggestion to do something that facilitates

acting in accordance with the rest of the elements of Taqwā, something that comes from the side of Allah as His grace and *taufīq*. An apt and ready at hand example of it lies in this very verse where the suggestion of: قُوْلُوْا قَوْلًا سَدِيْدًا (say the right thing) follows soon after the command of: اِتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ (*ittaqullāh*: Fear Allah). And immediately earlier too, in verse 69, after saying: *ittaqullāh*:(Fear Allah), it was said: "Do not be like those who caused pain to Mūsā) whereby people were reminded that causing pain to righteous and favoured servants of Allah is the most serious impediment in the achievement of *taqwa* and, once this impediment was removed, the way to *taqwā* will become easy.

Similarly in another verse the command to observe Taqwā has been supplemented by the direction of having the company of 'truthful persons' (9.118) which means that the easiest way to acquire the quality of *taqwā* is to remain in the company of righteous people. At another place the command of *taqwā* is followed by the direction of pondering on what one has sent ahead for the Hereafter, because it leads one to observe Taqwā (59.18).

Saying what is right leads to doing what is right both here and Hereinafter

Shāh 'Abdul-Qādir of Delhi رحمه الله تعالى has translated this verse in a way that leads to the conclusion that the promise of correction and betterment of deeds made to those who get used to speaking in straight forward manner is not restricted to religious deeds alone. In fact, everything one does in this material world is also included therein. Anyone who gets used to saying the right thing - that is, never lies, speaks with deliberation without erring or wavering, does not deceive anyone and does not say what would hurt - shall find his spiritual deeds for his eternal life in the Hereafter, also come out right for him. As for the things he must do to live in this mortal world, these too will turn for the better. (The Urdu speaking readers should refer to the original translation of Shāh Abdul Qādir to have a taste of its sweetness-editor)

Verses 72 - 73

اِنَّا عَرَضْنَا الْاَمَانَةَ عَلَى السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ وَالْجِبَالِ فَاَبَيْنَ اَنْ يَّحْمِلْنَهَا

وَاَشْفَقْنَ مِنْهَا وَحَمَلَهَا الْاِنْسَانُ ۭ اِنَّهٗ كَانَ ظَلُوْمًا جَهُوْلًا ﴿۷۲﴾
لِّيُعَذِّبَ اللّٰهُ الْمُنٰفِقِيْنَ وَالْمُنٰفِقٰتِ وَالْمُشْرِكِيْنَ وَالْمُشْرِكٰتِ وَيَتُوْبَ
اللّٰهُ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ وَالْمُؤْمِنٰتِ ۭ وَكَانَ اللّٰهُ غَفُوْرًا رَّحِيْمًا ﴿۷۳﴾

We did offer the Trust to the heavens and the earth and the mountains, but they refused to bear its burden and were afraid of it, and man picked it up. Surely, he was unjust (to himself), unaware (of the end), [72] **with the result that Allah will punish the hypocrites, men and women, and the Mushriks, men and women, and will accept the repentance of the believing men and women. Surely Allah is Most-Forgiving, Very-Merciful.** [73]

Commentary

Emphasis has been placed in this entire Sūrah on the reverence of the Messenger of Allah and on the obligation of obeying him. Now in the later part of the Sūrah, the great station and rank of this obedience has been identified. Here, the obedience to Allah and His Messenger and the implementation of their commands has been expressed through the word: *amanah*: (Trust), the reason of which will appear later.

What does "*amanah*" mean?

What is meant by the word: *amānah* at this place? many views of the leading exegetes among Ṣaḥabah and Tabi'īn, and others, have been reported to answer this question. Different things have been held to be the '*amānah*', such as, Islamic Legal Obligations, Protection of Chastity, Properties held under Trust, Removal of Impurity through having bath, Ṣalāh, Zakāh Fasting, Ḥajj etc. Therefore, the majority of commentators have said that all areas of religious conduct are included in it. (Qurṭubī)

In Tafsīr Maẓharī, it was said: The whole package of all obligations and prohibitions set by the Sharī'ah is *amanah*. In Al-Baḥr-ul-Mūḥīṭ, Abū Ḥayyān said:

اَلظَّاهِرُ اَنَّهَا كُلُّ مَايُؤْتَمَنُ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ اَمْرٍ وَنَهْيٍ وَشَانُ دِيْنٍ وَدُنْيَا وَالشَّرْعُ كُلُّهٗ اَمَانَةٌ
وَهٰذَا قَوْلُ الْجُمْهُوْرِ

Apparently every thing one is trusted with (by the Sharī'ah) from obligations and prohibitions, and every state of life which relates to this world or the Hereafter - in fact, the Sharī'ah, all

of it, is *amanah*. And this is the position the majority of Muslim scholars has taken.

In short, *amānah* (trust) means to be obligated with the precepts and injunctions of the Sharī'ah and being under command to carry these out. Once this is accomplished to the best of one's ability, the eternal blessings of Jannah (Paradise) have been promised, and on any contravention or shortcoming, there shall be the punishment of Jahannam (Hell). Some early commentators have said that *amānah* (trust) refers to the capability of fulfilling the heavy responsibility placed by Divine injunctions, something that depends on a particular degree of reason and awareness - and moving forward therein and deserving Divine vice-regency depends on this very capability. The species of creation that do not have this capability, no matter how high or superior their placement, simply cannot advance from their given place. For this reason, the skies and the earth, even angels, have no inherent ability to go forward from the place they are in. Everything from these creatures is restricted to whatever station of nearness (to the Creator) it has. Their state is aptly pointed to in a verse of the Qur'ān where it was said: مَامِنَّآ اِلَّا لَهٗ مَقَامٌ مَّعْلُوْمٌ (There is no one among us who does not have a known station - As-Ṣāffāt, 37:164)

Under this sense of *amānah* (trust), all narrations of Ḥadīth about *amānah* turn out to be symmetrical and the sayings of the majority of commentators also converge on almost a mutual agreement.

In the Ṣaḥīḥs of al-Bukhārī and Muslim, and in the Musnad of Aḥmad, there is a narration from Sayyidnā Ḥudhaifah رضي الله عنه saying that, 'the Holy Prophet ﷺ had told us about two things. One of these we have already witnessed with our own eyes. The unfolding of the other is still awaited. The first thing was that, "First of all, *amānah* was sent down into the hearts of the men of faith. Then, the Qur'ān was revealed and then the people of faith acquired knowledge from the Qur'ān, and practice from the Sunnah".

After that, he narrated the other Ḥadīth as follows: "A time will come when no sooner does a man rise from sleep, amanah (trust) will be confiscated from out of his heart leaving some of its traces behind, just like you would roll down an ember from the fire on your feet (and this ember will certainly roll away but) its traces will survive in the form of

inflammation or blister - although, no constituent element of the fire itself is left out there. So much so that people will enter into mutual transactions and contracts, but no one will fulfill the obligations of amanah due against him and (there will be such a dearth of trustworthy men that) people will be found saying that there is a trustworthy man in such and such tribe!"

In this Ḥadīth *amānah* has been declared to be something which relates to the heart and this alone has the ability of fulfilling the obligations and duties imposed by the Sharī'ah of Islam.

And according to a narration of Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Amr ﷺ appearing in the Musnad of Aḥmad, the Holy Prophet ﷺ has been reported to have said, "There are four things which, if you come to have them, and you have nothing out of so many worldly things, you are still no loser. (Those four things are): Guarding of trust, telling the truth, good morals and lawful sustenance. (From Ibn Kathīr)

An investigation into the way the 'trust' was 'offered'

In the cited verse (72), it was said that Allah Ta'ālā placed this *amānah* (trust) before the heavens, the earth and the mountains and all of them refused to bear the burden of this responsibility shrinking from it out of the danger of not being able to fulfill its due right - but, man did.

Here, it is worth pondering that the heavens, the earth and the mountains that are inanimate and, obviously devoid of knowledge and consciousness, how then would it be possible to rationalize the presentation of such an offer before them and that of their response to it? Some early commentators have taken this to be a figure of speech - as the noble Qur'ān has said elsewhere by way of comparison: لَوْ اَنْزَلْنَا هٰذَا الْقُرْاٰنَ عَلٰى جَبَلٍ لَّرَاَيْتَهٗ خَاشِعًا مُّتَصَدِّعًا مِّنْ خَشْيَةِ اللّٰهِ (Had We sent down this Qur'ān to a mountain, you would have seen it humbled, burst apart out of awe for Allah - Al-Ḥashr 59:21). It is obvious that this example has been given as a matter of supposition - not that it was really revealed to or on a mountain. So, these commentators have taken the 'offer' of 'trust' to the heavens etc. also in a figurative or metaphorical sense.

But, in the sight of the majority of Muslim scholars, it is not correct, because in the verse of Sūrah Al-Ḥashr, the Qur'ān has itself made it clear, by initiating the statement with the word: 'if,'that it is just a

hypothetical statement. On the contrary, the present verse is an affirmation of an incident in a descriptive style, and it is not permissible to take it in figurative or metaphorical sense without any proof. And if it is argued that these things have no senses and therefore no question can be asked from them and no answer is expected from them, then this argument stands rejected on the basis of other express statements of the Qur'ān. The reason is that the Qur'ān has explicitly said: وَإِنْ مِّنْ شَيْءٍ إِلَّا يُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِهٖ (And there is not a single thing that does not extol His purity and praise - Al-Isra', 17:44). And it is obvious that knowing Allah Ta'ālā, realizing that He is the Creator, the Master, the highest and the best, and glorifying Him consequently is something not possible without knowledge and consciousness. Therefore, it stands proved from this verse that knowledge and consciousness do exist in all elements of creation to the extent that these are also there in what is considered to be inanimate. On the basis of this knowledge and consciousness, these can be addressed and a response can be expected from them. Their response could take different forms. It could take the form of words and letters and - it is not rationally impossible - that Allah Ta'ālā could bestow on the heavens and the earth and the mountains the functional ability to verbalize and speak. Therefore, in the sight of the majority of the learned among the Muslim Ummah, the phenomenon of this *'ard* of *amānah* (the placement or offer of trust) came to pass in reality and these entities expressed their inability to bear the burden of this responsibility - also in reality. There is no simile or metaphor at work here.

The acceptance of the offer of the 'trust' was optional, not mandatory

A question may be asked here. When Allah Ta'ālā personally made the offer of this great trust before the heavens and the earth and the mountains, how could they dare refuse it? If they had contravened the Divine order, they would have been destroyed totally. In addition to that, the obedience of the heavens and the earth to divine orders is also proved from the verse: اَتَيْنَا طَآئِعِيْنَ (we come in obedience - Fuṣṣilat, 41:11) which means: When Allah Ta'ālā ordered the heavens and the earth to come to implement His command, be it willingly or unwilling, both of these responded by saying that they were pleased to come to obey His command.

The answer is that, in the cited verse (41:11), the command given had a

mandatory command with it where it was also said that they were to come with pleasure, or without it but, no matter what is the case, they had to obey the command. This is contrary to the present verse featuring the offer of the trust where following its presentation, they were given the choice of taking or not taking this awesome responsibility.

Ibn Kathīr has, with the support of various authorities, reported from several Ṣaḥābah and Tabi'īn - Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās, Ḥasan al-Baṣri, Mujāhid and others - the following details of this offer of the trust:

'What Allah Ta'ālā offered first to the heavens, then to the earth, and then to the mountains as a matter of choice was: Would you undertake to carry out the responsibility imposed by this trust (obedience to given injunctions) from Us against a return fixed for it?' Everyone asked, 'What is the return?' It was said, 'If you fulfill the demands of this trust (obedience to given injunctions) to the best of your ability, you will have the best of reward, and particularly the honor of having nearness to Allah, and if you failed to implement these injunctions, or fell short in it, you will be punished.' Hearing this, all these huge big bodies responded by saying, 'O our Lord, we are operating under Your command even now. But (now when we have been given a choice), we find ourselves weak and unable to bear the burden of this heavy responsibility. As reward, we do not want it, and as for punishment, we cannot bear it.' And Tafsīr Qurṭubī, with reference to Hakim Tirmidhi, has reported from Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said: '(After the offer of the trust to the heavens and the earth and the mountains, and after their response), Allah Ta'ālā addressed Sayyidnā 'Ādam عليه السلام and said: 'We offered Our trust to the heavens and the earth but they expressed their inability to bear the burden of this responsibility. Now, would you assume this responsibility knowing that which goes with it?' 'Ādam عليه السلام asked, 'O Lord, what is it that goes with it?' The answer was: 'If you succeeded in fulfilling the demands of this trust to your best (that is, remained obedient to your best), you will be rewarded (which will be in the form of the nearness and pleasure of Allah and the eternal bliss of Jannah (Paradise), and if you let this trust go to waste, you will be punished.' 'Ādam عليه السلام (eager to advance towards nearness and pleasure of Allah Ta'ālā) went ahead and assumed this responsibility. However, from the moment he assumed the burden of this heavy trust, not much time had passed, not even that much as is between the Ṣalāh of 'Aṣr and Ẓuhr,

within which the Satan snared him into that well-known slip and he was made to leave Jannah.

During which period of time did this event of the offer of trust take place?

From the narration of Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ which has appeared immediately above, it seems that this offer of trust made to the heavens and the earth and the mountains was made before the creation of 'Ādam. Then, following the creation of Sayyidnā 'Ādam ﷺ, it was also said before him that this trust was also offered to the heavens and the earth earlier, and that they did not have the ability to bear the burden of this responsibility, therefore, they excused themselves out of it.

And what is apparent here is that this event of the offer of trust came before the Covenant of Eternity, that is, the Covenant of 'Alast because the Covenant of أَلَسْتُ بِرَبِّكُمْ (Am I not your Lord?) is a phase of this very acceptance to carry out the responsibility of fulfilling the trust - and stands for taking a solemn pledge to hold and discharge the responsibilities enjoined by an office.

For vicegerency on the earth, the ability to bear the responsibilities of the great trust was necessary

As eternally predestined, Allah Ta'ālā had already decided to appoint Sayyidnā 'Ādam ﷺ His Khalīfah (vicegerent) on the earth and this Khilafah (vicegerency) could only be entrusted with one who bears the responsibility of upholding the essential obedience to Divine injunctions - because, it is the very objective of this Khīlafah that the Law of Allah be implemented on the earth and that the creation of Allah be induced to obey Divine injunctions. Therefore, as a matter of creational imperative, Sayyidnā 'Ādam ﷺ agreed to bear the burden of the responsibility of this trust - although the inability of other humongous units of creation to bear it was already in his knowledge. (Maẓharī and Bayān-ul-Qur'ān).

In the last sentence of verse 72: إِنَّهُ كَانَ ظَلُومًا جَهُولًا : Surely, he was unjust (to himself) unaware (of the end), the word: 'Zalūm' means one who is unjust to himself, and *'jahūl'* means one who is unaware of the end. From this sentence, it is generally assumed that it has appeared here blaming man in an absolute sense, that is, so ignorant was man that he went ahead inflicting injustice upon himself by accepting to carry such a big burden of responsibility, something beyond his power. But, in the light of

explicit statements in the Qur'ān, this is not actually so because 'man' may mean either Sayyidnā 'Ādam عليه السلام or whole mankind. Now Sayyidnā 'Ādam عليه السلام is, as a prophet, protected by Allah from committing sins. The burden of responsibility which he had assumed was carried out by him duly and certainly. As a result of this, he was made a vicegerent of Allah (Khalīfatullāh) and sent to the earth. He was made the object of prostration by angels and, in the Hereafter, his station is far higher than that of the angels. And if 'man' must mean mankind, then, in this class, there are several hundred thousands of noble prophets عليهم السلام and several millions of the righteous and the men of Allah (awliya' Allah) even angels emulate - those who proved by their conduct in life that they were capable of handling and deserving this Divine trust. It was because of the basis laid out by these very noble souls, who duly vacated the rights and demands inherent in the great trust, that the Holy Qur'ān declared mankind to be the noblest of Divine creation: وَلَقَدْ كَرَّمْنَا بَنِىٓ اٰدَمَ (And We bestowed dignity on the Children of 'Ādam - Al-Isra', 17:70). This proves that neither is Sayyidnā 'Ādam عليه السلام blameworthy, nor the mankind as a whole. Therefore, commentators have said that this sentence is not there to impute a blame, rather, it appears there as the description of the actual event with regard to the most of individuals in the class. As such, the sense is that the majority of human kind proved to be *zalūm* (one who inflicts injustice upon himself) and *jahūl* (one who is unaware of the end) that failed to fulfill the rights and demands of this trust and fell into the abyss of loss. And since this was the state of affairs with the majority, therefore, it was attributed to humankind.

In short, in the verse, the two words (*Ẓalūm* and *Jahūl*) mentioned above have been used for those particular individuals among human beings who did not obey the injunctions of the Sharī'ah as they were expected to, and failed to fulfill the right entailed by the *amānah* or trust placed with them - that is, the disbelievers, hypocrites, transgressors, the wicked, and sinning Muslims of the community. This Tafsīr has been reported from Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه, Sayyidnā Ibn Jubayr رضي الله عنه, Ḥasan Al-Baṣri رحمه الله تعالى and others. (Qurṭubī)

And there are others who have said that Ẓalūm and Jahūl has been used at this place in the sense of 'naïve', as an affectionate form of address carrying the thought that man, brimming with love for his Creator and in quest of the station of nearness to Him, simply forgot the

end of the whole thing. Similarly, these words could also be taken to have been spoken for the entire humankind. In Tafsīr Maẓharī, details of this aspect have been reported from Mujaddid Alf Thānī and other noble Ṣufīs.

لِيُعَذِّبَ اللّٰهُ الْمُنٰفِقِيْنَ وَالْمُنٰفِقٰتِ (with the result that Allah will punish the hypocrites, men and women, and the Mushriks, men and women, and will accept the repentance of the believing men and women. Surely Allah is Most-Forgiving, Very-Merciful. [73]) The letter 'lam' used in the beginning of this verse is not for mentioning the cause or aim, as generally understood in common usage, but it is the lam of 'aqibah in the terminology of Arabic linguistics. It points out to the end of something, as it appears in a line of Arabic poetry which reads:

لِدُوْا لِلْمَوْتِ وَابْنُوْا لِلْخَرَابِ

'Be born only to be dead and build only to be ruined'

It does not mean that the aim of one's birth was to be dead or that the aim of constructing of a building was that it could be ruined, but it simply means that the end of everyone born is death and the end of every building is falling into ruins.

The sense of the verse is that, as a result of man's assumption of responsibility for the trust, mankind will split in two groups: (1) Disbelievers, hypocrites and others who will rebel against Divine orders and become wasters of the great 'trust'. They will be punished. (2) There will be believing men and believing women who, through their obedience to Divine injunctions, will fulfill the dictates of the trust reposed in them. They will be treated with mercy and forgiveness.

The Tafsīr of the two words: Ẓalūm and Jahūl that has been reported above from most Tafsīr authorities finds additional support in this last sentence as well - that these words are not meant for the whole mankind. In fact, they particularly refer to those individuals who wasted away the Divine trust reposed in them. And Allah, Pure and High, knows best.

The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Aḥzāb ends here
With the help of and praise for Allah Ta'ālā

Sūrah Saba'

(Sheba)

Sūrah Saba' is Makkī. It has 50 Verses and 6 Sections

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 9

اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ الَّذِیْ لَهٗ مَافِی السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَا فِی الْاَرْضِ وَلَهُ الْحَمْدُ فِی
الْاٰخِرَةِ ؕ وَهُوَالْحَكِیْمُ الْخَبِیْرُ ﴿۱﴾ یَعْلَمُ مَا یَلِجُ فِی الْاَرْضِ وَمَا
یَخْرُجُ مِنْهَا وَمَا یَنْزِلُ مِنَ السَّمَآءِ وَمَا یَعْرُجُ فِیْهَا ؕ وَهُوَالرَّحِیْمُ
الْغَفُوْرُ ﴿۲﴾ وَقَالَ الَّذِیْنَ كَفَرُوْا لَاتَاْتِیْنَا السَّاعَةُ ؕ قُلْ بَلٰی وَرَبِّیْ
لَتَاْتِیَنَّكُمْ ۙ عٰلِمِ الْغَیْبِ ۚ لَایَعْزُبُ عَنْهُ مِثْقَالُ ذَرَّةٍ فِی السَّمٰوٰتِ وَلَا
فِی الْاَرْضِ وَلَآ اَصْغَرُ مِنْ ذٰلِكَ وَلَآ اَكْبَرُ اِلَّا فِیْ كِتٰبٍ مُّبِیْنٍ ﴿۳﴾
لِّیَجْزِیَ الَّذِیْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ ؕ اُولٰٓئِكَ لَهُمْ مَّغْفِرَةٌ وَّرِزْقٌ
كَرِیْمٌ ﴿۴﴾ وَالَّذِیْنَ سَعَوْا فِیْۤ اٰیٰتِنَا مُعٰجِزِیْنَ اُولٰٓئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مِّنْ
رِّجْزٍ اَلِیْمٌ ﴿۵﴾ وَ یَرَی الَّذِیْنَ اُوْتُوا الْعِلْمَ الَّذِیْۤ اُنْزِلَ اِلَیْكَ مِنْ رَّبِّكَ
هُوَالْحَقَّ ۙ وَیَهْدِیْۤ اِلٰی صِرَاطِ الْعَزِیْزِ الْحَمِیْدِ ﴿۶﴾ وَقَالَ الَّذِیْنَ
كَفَرُوْا هَلْ نَدُلُّكُمْ عَلٰی رَجُلٍ یُّنَبِّئُكُمْ اِذَا مُزِّقْتُمْ كُلَّ مُمَزَّقٍ ۙ اِنَّكُمْ
لَفِیْ خَلْقٍ جَدِیْدٍ ﴿۷﴾ ۚ اَفْتَرٰی عَلَی اللّٰهِ كَذِبًا اَمْ بِهٖ جِنَّةٌ ؕ بَلِ الَّذِیْنَ
لَا یُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِالْاٰخِرَةِ فِی الْعَذَابِ وَالضَّلٰلِ الْبَعِیْدِ ﴿۸﴾ اَفَلَمْ یَرَوْا اِلٰی

مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ مِّنَ السَّمَآءِ وَالْأَرْضِ ؕ إِنْ نَّشَأْ نَخْسِفْ
بِهِمُ الْأَرْضَ أَوْ نُسْقِطْ عَلَيْهِمْ كِسَفًا مِّنَ السَّمَآءِ ؕ إِنَّ فِي ذٰلِكَ لَآيَةً
لِّكُلِّ عَبْدٍ مُّنِيبٍ ﴿٩﴾

Praise be to Allah, to whom belongs all that is in the heavens and all that is on the earth. And for Him is the praise in the Hereafter. And He is the Wise, the All-Aware. [1] He knows all that goes into the earth and all that comes out therefrom, and all that comes down from the sky and all that ascends thereto. And He is the Very-Merciful, the Most-Forgiving. [2] And said those who disbelieve, "The Hour (i.e. the Day of Judgment) will not come to us." Say, "Why not? By my Lord, the knower of the Unseen, it will come to you. Nothing in the heavens and in the earth, even to the measure of a particle, can escape Him, nor is there anything smaller than that or bigger, that is not recorded in a manifest book. [3] (The Hour will come,) so that He rewards those who believed and did righteous deeds. For such people, there is forgiveness (from Allah) and a noble provision. [4] And those who strived against Our signs to defeat (the messenger), for such people there is a painful punishment of the divine wrath. [5] And those blessed with knowledge see that what is sent to you from your Lord is the truth and it guides (people) to the path of the All-Mighty, the All-Praised. [6] And the disbelievers said," Shall we point out to you a man who informs you that, when you are totally torn into pieces, you will certainly be (raised) in a new creation? [7] Has he forged a lie against Allah, or is there a madness in him?" No, but those who do not believe in the Hereafter are in torment and far astray from the right path. [8] Have they not, then, looked to the sky and the earth that lies before them and behind them? If We so will, We would make the earth swallow them up, or cause pieces of the sky fall upon them. Surely, in this there is a sign for a slave of Allah who turns to Him.[9]

Commentary

عَالِمِ الْغَيْبِ (the knower of the unseen). This is an attribute of the Rabb (Lord) in whose name an oath has been taken in verse 3. At this place, out of the many attributes of Allah Ta'ālā, the attribute of all-encompassing knowledge and the knowledge of the unseen has,

perhaps, been mentioned particularly because the text is dealing with the matter of the deniers of the day of Resurrection. The major reason why the disbelievers rejected the inevitability of Qiyāmah, the day of doom, was their inability to comprehend how the whole thing would work out. When all human beings die, and become dust, and the particles of this dust get scattered all over the world, they wondered, how would it be possible to collect all these particles, separate the particles belonging to each human being from the particles of all others, and then go on to put the relevant particles back into the frame of everyone's existence? And they took it as impossible because they had very conveniently taken the knowledge and power of Allah Ta'ālā on the analogy of their own knowledge and power! Allah Ta'ālā has told them that His knowledge encompasses the entire universe in a manner that He knows everything in the heavens and the earth to the extent that He also knows where and in what state it is. Not a single particle of what has been created remains outside His knowledge - and this comprehensive and all-encompassing knowledge is hallmark of Allah Ta'ālā. No created entity, whether an angel or prophet, can ever have such an all-encompassing knowledge that no particle of this universe remains outside it. Then, for a Being that has such an all-encompassing knowledge, why would it be difficult to reclaim the scattered particles of a human being from all over the universe, each separate from the other, and reconstitute their bodies from these once again?

لِيَجْزِىَ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا

(So that He rewards those who believed - 4)

This sentence is connected with the earlier one: لَتَاْتِيَنَّكُمْ that is, al-Qiyāmah or the Doomsday is bound to come and its purpose will be to reward believers and to provide for them the best sustenance from Jannah (Paradise). And in contrast to them stand: اَلَّذِيْنَ سَعَوْا فِيْٓ اٰيٰتِنَا (5) i.e. those who made efforts to find faults with Our verses and tried to stop people from believing in them.

The word: مُعٰجِزِيْنَ which appears immediately after the verse cited above means that this effort by them was as if they would render Us helpless in seizing them and would thus go scot-free from having to be present on the last day of Qiyāmah.

The sentence that follows immediately after: أُولٰئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مِّنْ رِّجْزٍ اَلِيْمٌ means that these people shall receive punishment, a severe punishment that will be painful.

Verse 6: وَ يَرَى الَّذِيْنَ اُوْتُوا الْعِلْمَ (34:6) talks about believers in contrast with those who denied the coming of the Qiyāmah. The former had put their faith in it and became the beneficiaries of the knowledge given by Allah Ta'ālā to the Holy Prophet ﷺ by revelation.

Reported in verse 7: وَقَالَ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا هَلْ نَدُلُّكُمْ عَلٰى رَجُلٍ يُّنَبِّئُكُمْ اِذَا مُزِّقْتُمْ كُلَّ مُمَزَّقٍ ۙ اِنَّكُمْ لَفِيْ خَلْقٍ جَدِيْدٍ (Shall we point out to you a man...). There is a statement of disbelievers who denied the coming of Qiyāmah. In an exercise of mockery, they used to say, 'come, let us identify an unusual person for your benefit, a person who loves to tell you how, when you die and become dust, totally powdered into countless particles, even after all that, you will be brought into a new creation - and that you, all reshaped into the form you once were, will be made to stand up alive!'

It is obvious that the person alluded to here is no other but the Holy Prophet ﷺ who used to tell people that Qiyāmah will come when the dead will become alive once again, and exhorted people to put their faith in it. All these people who were deriding him knew him perfectly well, but in the present context, they have mentioned him in a manner as if they knew nothing else about him - nothing else but that he tells people about the dead rising alive on the day of Qiyāmah. They had purposely elected to refer to him in that manner just to mock and deride him.

The word: مُزِّقْتُمْ (when you are totally torn into pieces) is a derivation from: مَزْق (*mazq*) which means splitting apart and rendering to pieces, and: كُلَّ مُمَزَّقٍ (*kulla mumazzaq*: (totally torn) means the disintegration of the human body in a manner that all its particles get dispersed separately. Onwards from here, they take up another mode to comment on his statement relating to the Qiyāmah.

They say: اَفْتَرٰى عَلَى اللّٰهِ كَذِبًا اَمْ بِهٖ جِنَّةٌ (Has he forged a lie against Allah, or is there a madness in him?"- 34:8). The drive of their remark is that the idea that all totally disintegrated particles of the body will stand reassembled together, turn into the human body once again and be alive as well, is so unreasonable, to start with, that there remains practically no question of entertaining or accepting it. Therefore, this claim of the Holy Prophet ﷺ

is either a deliberate attempt to fabricate a lie against Allah Ta'ālā, or the person who says so is insane and no premise of his statement is correct.

The last verse (9): اَفَلَمْ يَرَوْا اِلٰى مَابَيْنَ اَيْدِيْهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ (Have they not, then, looked to the sky and the earth that lies before them and behind them?) carries two chastening messages:

(1) It proves that one can come to believe in the coming of the Qiyāmah by pondering over what has been created in the heavens and the earth, and once the perfect power of Allah Ta'ālā becomes visible through observation, the element of improbability which prohibited its deniers from accepting it could stand removed.

(2) Then, right along with this positive invitation to see and learn on their own, the deniers have also been served with a warning of punishment. They have been told that should they continue to hold firmly to their attitude of rejection and denial, then, they should also realize that it is within this power of Allah Ta'ālā which could make the very same blessings to become a punishment for them, such as, the earth swallows them, or that the sky cracks apart and falls on them.

Verses 10 - 14

وَلَقَدْ اٰتَيْنَا دَاوٗدَ مِنَّا فَضْلًا ۭ يٰجِبَالُ اَوِّبِىْ مَعَهٗ وَالطَّيْرَ ۚ وَ اَلَنَّا لَهُ
الْحَدِيْدَ ﴿١٠﴾ اَنِ اعْمَلْ سٰبِغٰتٍ وَّقَدِّرْ فِى السَّرْدِ وَاعْمَلُوْا صَالِحًا ۭ
اِنِّىْ بِمَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ بَصِيْرٌ ﴿١١﴾ وَلِسُلَيْمٰنَ الرِّيْحَ غُدُوُّهَا شَهْرٌ
وَّرَوَاحُهَا شَهْرٌ ۚ وَاَسَلْنَا لَهٗ عَيْنَ الْقِطْرِ ۭ وَمِنَ الْجِنِّ مَنْ يَّعْمَلُ بَيْنَ
يَدَيْهِ بِاِذْنِ رَبِّهٖ ۭ وَمَنْ يَّزِغْ مِنْهُمْ عَنْ اَمْرِنَا نُذِقْهُ مِنْ عَذَابِ السَّعِيْرِ
﴿١٢﴾ يَعْمَلُوْنَ لَهٗ مَا يَشَآءُ مِنْ مَّحَارِيْبَ وَتَمَاثِيْلَ وَجِفَانٍ
كَالْجَوَابِ وَقُدُوْرٍ رّٰسِيٰتٍ ۭ اِعْمَلُوْٓا اٰلَ دَاوٗدَ شُكْرًا ۭ وَقَلِيْلٌ مِّنْ
عِبَادِىَ الشَّكُوْرُ ﴿١٣﴾ فَلَمَّا قَضَيْنَا عَلَيْهِ الْمَوْتَ مَادَلَّهُمْ عَلٰى مَوْتِهٖٓ
اِلَّا دَآبَّةُ الْاَرْضِ تَاْكُلُ مِنْسَاَتَهٗ ۚ فَلَمَّا خَرَّ تَبَيَّنَتِ الْجِنُّ اَنْ لَّوْ كَانُوْا

يَعْلَمُونَ الْغَيْبَ مَالَبِثُوا فِي الْعَذَابِ الْمُهِينِ ﴿١٤﴾

And surely We bestowed grace from Us on Dāwūd." O mountains, pronounce with him Allah's purity repeatedly -- and you too O birds!" And We made the iron soft for him [10] (saying to him,)" Make coats of armour, and maintain balance in combining (their) rings, and do, all of you, righteous deeds. Surely I am watchful of what you do." [11] And for Sulayman (We subjugated) the wind; its journey in the morning was (equal to the journey of) one month, and its journey in the afternoon was (equal to the journey) of another month. And We caused a stream of copper to flow for him. And there were some Jinns who worked before him by the leave of his Lord. And whoever of them would deviate from Our command, We would make him taste the punishment of the blazing fire. [12] They used to make for him whatever he wished of castles, images, basins as (large as) tanks and big cook-wares fixed (in their places). " Do good, O family of Dāwūd , in thankfulness. And few from My slaves are thankful." [13] So, when We decided (that) death (should come) upon him, nothing gave them any indication of his death, except a creature of the earth that had eaten up his sceptre. So, when he fell down, the Jinns came to know that if they had the knowledge of the Unseen, they would not have stayed (so long) in the humiliating punishment. [14]

Commentary

The preceding verses have addressed the arguments of those who denied the possibility of the life after death, and believed it to be irrational that a person may be revived after he has died and the parts of his body are decomposed and turned into dust. Now the stories of Sayyidnā Dāwūd and Sulaymān عليهما السلام have been narrated in the present verses to show that Allah Ta'ālā has already demonstrated His power by the miraculous acts that were deemed by people to be impossible, like making iron as soft as wax, subjugating the wind and making copper as liquid as water.

The word: فضل (*faḍl*) in the opening sentence of verse 10: وَلَقَدْ اٰتَيْنَا دَاوٗدَ مِنَّا فَضْلًا (And surely We bestowed grace from Us on Dāwūd) means excess, favor or grace. The reference is to particular attributes bestowed on him in excess of others. Allah Ta'ālā has blessed every prophet with some

unique attributes that are considered to be their distinctive excellence. Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام was given a few of his own. Besides being a prophet and messenger of Allah, he was also blessed with power over the world of his time. Then there was his gifted voice. When he was busy with the dhikr of Allah or the recitation of Torah, the birds flying above would converge over him to listen. He was blessed with similar other miracles which find mention a little later.

The word: أَوِّبِي (*awwibi*) in the direct address appearing next: يَا جِبَالُ أَوِّبِي (*ya jibalu awwibi*) is a derivation from: تَأوِيب (*ta'wib*) which means to return or repeat. The sense is that Allah Ta'ālā had commanded the mountains that once Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام starts making Dhikr and Tasbiḥ (the glorification of Allah), the mountains too should start reciting the same words after him.

Similar to this is the tafsir of Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه who has explained: أَوِّبِي (awwibi: return, or repeat after) as being in the sense of: سَبِّحِي (*sabbiḥi*: glorify, recite the praise of Allah). (Ibn Kathīr)

This Tasbiḥ (glorification of Allah) the mountains used to do along with Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام is in addition to the universal Tasbiḥ done by the entire creation of Allah that goes on everywhere, all the time, in every age - as said in the noble Qur'ān: وَإِنْ مِّنْ شَيْءٍ إِلَّا يُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِهِ وَلَٰكِنْ لَا تَفْقَهُونَ تَسْبِيحَهُمْ (And there is not a single thing that does not extol His purity and praise, but you do not understand their extolling - 17:44). The tasbih mentioned here has the status of a miracle shown at the hands of Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام. For this reason, it is obvious that common listeners would be hearing and understanding this Tasbiḥ. Otherwise, it would have just not been a miracle.

From here we also learn that the mountains synchronizing their voice with the voice of Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام and repeating the Tasbiḥ after him was not in the manner sound reverberates, something commonly heard when someone calls inside a dome or well or elsewhere and the voice reverberates or returns. The reason is that the noble Qur'ān has mentioned the manifestation of this phenomenon as a special gift and grace bestowed upon Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام. The reverberation of sound is a physical thing. It has nothing to do with someone's excellence. It will work for anyone, even for a disbeliever. At a place where sound

reverberates, his or her voice too will shoot back.

The word: وَالطَّيْرَ (*waṭṭair*: and you too O birds) refers to the phenomenon of birds joining up in the air at his voice and doing tasbih like the mountains - as it has been mentioned in another verse of the Qur'ān: اِنَّا سَخَّرْنَا الْجِبَالَ مَعَهٗ يُسَبِّحْنَ بِالْعَشِيِّ وَالْاِشْرَاقِ وَالطَّيْرَ مَحْشُوْرَةً (We had subjugated the mountains to join him (in) making *tasbiḥ* (i.e. pronouncing Allah's purity) at evening and sunrise, and the birds as well mustered together 38:18).

In the last sentence of verse 10 and the first sentence of verse 11, it was said: وَاَلَنَّا لَهُ الْحَدِيْدَ اَنِ اعْمَلْ سٰبِغٰتٍ وَّقَدِّرْ فِى السَّرْدِ (And We made the iron soft for him (saying to him,)" Make coats of armour, and maintain balance in combining (their) rings,' - 34:10). This is another miracle that iron was made soft for him. Early tafsir authorities - Ḥasan Baṣri, Qatādah, A'mash, and others - said that Allah Ta'ālā had, by way of a miracle, turned iron soft as wax for him. To make something out of it, he needed no fire, or hammer, or any other tools. The part of the statement appearing in verse 11 goes on to state that the iron was made soft for him so that he could easily make coats of mail with iron. In another verse, it has also been mentioned that Allah Ta'ālā had Himself taught him the making of coats of mail: وَعَلَّمْنٰهُ صَنْعَةَ لَبُوْسٍ لَّكُمْ (And We taught him making of armour as dress for you - 21:80). And what appears later in this very verse 11: قَدِّرْ فِى السَّرْدِ (and maintain balance in combining (their) rings) also leads to the final stage of training in this craft. The word: قَدِّرْ (*qaddir*) is derived from: تَقْدِيْر (*taqdīr*) which means making on a certain measure while the word: سَرْد (*sard*) literally means to weave. The sense thus released is to make a coat of mail in a manner that its links come out balanced and proportionate without one being small and the other being big, so that it turns out strong as well as looks good when seen. This tafsir of: قَدِّرْ فِى السَّرْدِ (and maintain balance in combining (their) rings) has been reported from Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه.' (Ibn Kathīr)

Special Note

1. This also tells us that the consideration for apparent beauty in man-made things is desirable, since Allah Ta'ālā has given a particular instruction for it.

2. Some early commentators take taqdir in: قَدِّرْ فِى السَّرْدِ (*qaddir fi 's-sard:* and maintain balance in combining (their) rings) to mean that

there should be a fixed measure of time devoted to this craft, lest most of the time is consumed in that single pursuit causing disruption in duties of 'ibadah and responsibilities of the office and state. In the light of this tafsir, we come to know that people in areas of industry and labor should also spare some time for *'ibādah* and personal enrichment while remaining duly organized as far as the necessary management of time is concerned. (Rūḥ ul-Ma'ānī)

The merit and grace of inventing, making and producing things

The verse under study proves that making and manufacturing things of need is so significant that Allah Ta'ālā has taken it upon Himself to teach its mores to His great prophets. That Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام was trained to make coats of mail already stands proved from this very verse. Then, this is how Sayyidnā Nūḥ عليه السلام was inducted into boat building. He was told: وَاصْنَعِ الْفُلْكَ بِأَعْيُنِنَا : "Build the boat before Us" [literally, 'with Our Eyes' or 'under Our Eyes'] - 11:37. 'Build before Us' simply means 'build the way We tell you to.' That some other prophets were also taught the making of different things in a similar manner stands proved from some narrations of Ḥadīth. There is a published book with the title of al-tibb al-nabawii attributed to Ḥadīth authority, Ḥafiẓ Shamsuddīn adh-Dhahabi. It contains a narration to the effect that the making of almost all important and necessary things in human life - such as, house-building, cloth-weaving, tree-planting, food-processing and wheel-based conveyances for transportation etc. - was taught by Allah Ta'ālā to His prophets عليهم السلام through the medium of wahy (revelation).

It is a sin to take the labourers as low in rank

In Arabia, different people used to go in different professions. No profession or occupation was considered low or disgraceful and no one was taken to be any better or worse on the basis of work, trade, or occupation, nor would brotherhoods and communities rise solely on the basis of occupation. The promotion of the idea of such communities as based on occupation and the attitude of taking some professions low and mean as such was alien there. This was a product of Hindu India. Having lived there with them, Muslims too were influenced by it.

The wisdom of having Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام trained into the making of coat of mail

From a narration of the Ḥadīth authority, Ḥafiẓ Ibn 'Asākir, it has

been reported in Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr that during the period of his rule, Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام used to visit bazaars and public places while in disguise and would ask people coming in from different sides as to what they thought about Dāwūd. Since, justice reigned in the kingdom of Sayyidnā Dāwūd, people were living a good life, no one had any complaints against the government of the time, therefore, whoever he asked, the addressee would have words of praise for him and express his gratefulness for the prevailing equity and justice.

It was for his education and grooming that Allah Ta'ālā sent an angel in the shape of a man. When Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام came out on his routine quest for truth, this angel met him. As usual with him, he put the same question to him. The angel said, 'Dāwūd is a very good man and as compared to everyone, he is doing better for himself and better for his people and subjects too. But, he has one habit which, if it were not there, he would have been perfect.' Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام asked, 'What habit is that?' The angel said, 'He takes the expenses on himself and his family from the property of Muslims, that is, from the Baytul-Mal (The Public Treasury of a Muslim State).'

Hearing this, Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام made it a point to immediately turn to Allah subhanahu wa Ta'ālā with self-reproach, lamentation and prayer, saying, 'Teach me to do something for which I have to work with my own hands and support myself and my family with wages from it while working gratis (free, without compensation) to serve Muslims and run their state.' Allah Ta'ālā answered his prayer and taught him the art of making coats of mail and the honor, befitting a prophet, He bestowed on him was that iron was made wax for him so that it became unusually easy for him to earn his sustenance within a short period of time and thus use the rest of his time for 'Ibadah (worship) and obligations of state management.

Ruling

For a Khalifah (Muslim head of an Islamic state) of the time, or a king, or ruler who spends all his time in taking care of state affairs, it is permissible in the Sharī'ah of Islam that he takes his average living expenses from Baytul-Mal. But, should there be some other means of livelihood available, then, that would be more desirable - as it was with Sayyidnā Sulaymān عليه السلام. Allah Ta'ālā had put the treasures of the whole

world at his disposal. Gold, precious stones and everything needed was available to him in abundance. Then Allah Ta'ālā had also allowed him to expend whatever he wished from the holdings of the Baytul-Mal, and according to the verse: فَامْنُنْ اَوْ اَمْسِكْ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ (So, do favour (to someone) or withhold (it) with no (requirement to give) account - 38:39), he was also given the assurance that he could spend in whatever manner he wished and that he did not have to account for it. But, this event came to pass because Allah Ta'ālā, in His wisdom, would have the noble prophets occupy a very high station and, it was after that, that Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام - despite being the ruler of an empire - used to earn his living with his own hands, and was always satisfied with it.

'Ulama' (religious scholars) who serve the religious cause of education and communication (Ta'lim and Tabligh) without remuneration, and the Qāḍī (judge) and Mufti (juri-consult, Muslim jurist highly trained to deliver authenticated rulings on problems and issues for the benefit of the community at large) who spend their time in public service are also governed by the same injunction, that is, they can take their living expenses from the Baytul-Mal. But, should there be some other way to eke out a living - which does not hinder the ongoing religious service being performed - then, that would be better.

Special Note

From this conduct of Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام, whereby he demonstrated the great concern he had to find out the informal, free and totally unfettered opinions of people about his ways of doing things, it is proved that one usually does not know his own shortcomings, therefore, this should be found out from others. The well-known jurist of Islam, Imām Mālik رحمه الله تعالى also paid particular attention to find out what common people thought about him.

We can now turn to verse 12: وَلِسُلَيْمٰنَ الرِّيْحَ غُدُوُّهَا شَهْرٌ وَّرَوَاحُهَا شَهْرٌ (And for Sulaymān: (We subjugated) the wind; its journey in the morning was (equal to the journey of) one month, and its journey in the afternoon was (equal to the journey) of another month). After having mentioned the blessings bestowed upon Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام, the text refers to Sayyidnā Sulaymān عليه السلام. It was said that the way Allah Ta'ālā had subjugated mountains and birds for Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام, similarly, the Wind was subjugated for Sayyidnā Sulaymān عليه السلام. It would take the

throne of Sayyidnā Sulaymān عليه السلام on which he was seated with a large number of his courtiers to wherever he wished always under his command. Early exegete, Ḥasan al-Baṣri has said that the miracle of the subjugation of the Wind was bestowed upon Sayyidnā Sulaymān عليه السلام in return for what he had done once while inspecting his stable of horses. So engrossed he became in this activity that he missed the Ṣalah of al-'asr. Since the horses became the cause of this negligence, Sayyidnā Sulaymān عليه السلام decided to eliminate the very cause of negligence. He sacrificed these horses by slaughtering them (since the sacrifice of horses was also permissible in the law of Sayyidnā Sulaymān عليه السلام very much like the cows and oxen) and since these horses were owned by Sayyidnā Sulaymān عليه السلام, the question of bringing loss to the Baytul-Mal simply does not arise, and the doubt of wasting personal property because of the sacrifice also does not hold good. Full relevant details about it will appear in the commentary on Sūrah Sad (38:30-40, appearing later in this very Volume VII). In short, because Sayyidnā Sulaymān عليه السلام sacrificed the horses he rode, Allah Ta'ālā blessed him with a better ride. (Qurṭubī)

In the other part of the verse taken up immediately earlier: غُدُوُّهَا شَهْرٌ وَّرَوَاحُهَا شَهْرٌ (34:12), the word: غُدُوّ (*ghuduww*) means moving in the morning and the word: رَوَاح (*rawaḥ*) means moving in the evening. Thus, the sense of the verse comes to be that this throne of Sulaymān perched on the wings of the wind from the morning to the afternoon would cover the travel distance of one month, and then, from early evening to late night, that of another one month. In this way, it used to cover the travel distance of two months in one full day.

According to Ḥasan al-Baṣri رحمه الله تعالى, Sayyidnā Sulaymān عليه السلام would leave Baytul-Maqdis in the morning, reach Istakhr by afternoon and had his lunch there. Then he would leave after Zuhr and by the time he got to Kābul, it would be night. The travel distance between Baytul-Maqdis and Istakhr is something a swift rider could cover in a month. Similarly, the travel distance from Istakhr to Kābul is also what a swift rider could cover in a month. (Ibn Kathīr)

To explain the next sentence of verse 12: وَأَسَلْنَا لَهُ عَيْنَ الْقِطْرِ (And We caused a stream of copper to flow for him), it can be said that Allah Ta'ālā made a metal as hard as the copper turn into a liquid flowing like water, even gushing forth like a stream of water, and was not hot either - so

that, utensils and other things of need could be easily shaped from of it.

Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ said that this stream started flowing as far as it would take a travel of three days and three nights to cover that distance. And this was located in the land of Yemen. Then, in the narration of Mujahid, it appears that this stream started from San'a' in Yemen and continued to flow like a stream of water up to a travel distance of three days and three nights. Famous grammarian, Khalīl Nahwi said that the word: قِطْر (*qiṭr*) mentioned in this verse means molten copper. (Qurṭubī)

The next sentence: وَمِنَ الْجِنِّ مَنْ يَّعْمَلُ بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ (And there were some Jinns who worked before him by the leave of his Lord - 34:12) is also connected with the ellipsis (محذوف : maḥdhuf) of : سَخَّرْنَا (*sakhkharna*: We subjugated). The sense is that 'We subjugated for Sulaymān ﷺ such people from among the Jinns who would do the chores he assigned to them before him - as commanded by their Lord. The addition of the expression: بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ (baiyna yadaiyhi: before him) may, perhaps, be there to make it clear that the subjugation of Jinns was not of the kind mentioned in the Qur'ān where the text talks about harnessing the Moon and the Sun into the service of human beings. Instead, this subjugation was in the nature of mastery over the Jinns who worked before him like vassals busy doing chores assigned to them.

The matter of the subjugation of Jinns

As for the subjugation of Jinns (for Sulaymān ﷺ) mentioned at this place, it was by the command of Allah Ta'ālā and there can be no doubt about its possibility. Similarly, what has appeared in some narrations about some noble Sahabah that they had Jinns made subservient to them, it was the same kind of subjugation by the leave of Allah with which they were blessed as a Karamah. It was not based on any act or recitation (Waẓifah) on their part - as mentioned by 'Allamah Sharbini in Tafsīr As-sirajūl-Munīr under his commentary on this verse. He has cited several events relating to Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah, 'Ubaiyy Ibn Ka'b, Mu'adh Ibn Jabal, 'Umar Ibn al-Khaṭṭab, Abū Ayyūb al-Anṣārī, Zayd Ibn Thabit and others رضی اللہ عنہم اجمعین which prove that the Jinns used to be at their service. But, it was nothing but the grace and mercy of Allah Ta'ālā that, like Sayyidnā Sulaymān ﷺ, He made some Jinns subservient to these blessed souls.

But, the particular 'subjugation' through incantations and correlated sets of self-invented actions popular among 'amils or practitioners of this line of activity is something one should take with a pinch of salt and first find out the Islamic rule of guidance in this matter. Qadi Badruddin Shibli al-Ḥanafi who is one of the scholars of the eighth century has written a book, 'Akam- ul-Marjan fi Aḥkām- il-Jann' on this subject. According to him, it is Sayyidnā Sulaymān عليه السلام who has been the first one to have the Jinn into his service with the leave of Allah and as a miracle. And the people of Persia attribute this to Jamshaid Ibn Onjahan as being served by the Jinns. Similarly, there are events on record about 'Asif Ibn Barkhiya and others who were connected with Sayyidnā Sulaymān عليه السلام which indicate that they too had Jinns subservient to them. Then, the most famous among Muslims are Abū Naṣr Aḥmad Ibn Hilal al-Bukail and Hilal Ibn Wasif attributed to whom there are many unusual events of the subservience of the Jinns to them. Hilal Ibn Wasif has written a full book in which he has put together what the Jinns said to Sayyidnā Sulaymān عليه السلام and the pledges Sayyidnā Sulaymān عليه السلام took from them.

Qāḍī Badruddīn has written in this very book that generally the 'amils who do their thing to subjugate the Jinns use satanic words of infidelity (Kufr) and sorcery (Seḥr) liked by infidel Jinns and satans. The secret of why they would accept to become their vassals is nothing but that they stand placated by their deeds soaked in kufr and shirk and go on to do a few jobs for them by way of bribe. This is the reason why in doing things of this nature, they would write the Holy Qur'ān with blood and other impurities. Hence, the disbelieving Jinns and satans, pleased with their evil offering, would do what they want them to do. However, about a person named Ibn al-Imām, he has written that he lived during the period of Khalifah Mu'tadid bil-lah and he had subjugated the Jinns through the effective use of Divine Names. As such, there was nothing in his recitations that would go counter to the Sharī'ah. ('Akam-ul-Marjan, p. 100)

In short, if the Jinns get subjugated for someone, without his own intention or motivated action, solely being something from Allah, as it stands proved in the case of Sayyidnā Sulaymān عليه السلام and some noble Ṣaḥabah of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, then, that is included under Mu'jizah

(miracle shown at the hands of a prophet of Allah) or karamah (working of wonder in the nature of a miracle shown at the hands of men of Allah). And such subservience when achieved through bland pragmatism of formula incantations (*'amaliyāt*) would be judged on the basis of its active content. If it contains words of Kufr, or deeds of kufr, it will be nothing but kufr (disbelief, infidelity) - and if it is composed of disobedience or sin only, then, it is a major sin. Then, there are strange words used in such formula invocations and actions. Their meanings are not known. These too have been classed by Muslim jurists as impermissible on the basis that the possibility of such words being loaded with words that contain kufr, shirk and sinfulness cannot be ruled out. In 'Akam-ul-Marjan, Qāḍī Badruddīn has written that the use of words the meanings of which are not known is also impermissible.

And if this act of subjugation be through Divine Names or Qur'ānic Verses and there also be no such sin like the use of impurities in it, then, it is permissible with the condition that the aim thereby should be to remain personally safe against harm caused by the Jinns, or save other Muslims from it. In other words, the aim should be to remove harm, and not to secure benefits, because if it is adopted as a profession to earn money, it amounts to the enslavement of someone created free and to exacting forced labour without remuneration, hence prohibited (ḥarām). Allah knows best.

The last sentence of verse 12 is: وَمَنْ يَّزِغْ مِنْهُمْ عَنْ اَمْرِنَا نُذِقْهُ مِنْ عَذَابِ السَّعِيْرِ (And whoever of them would deviate from Our command, We would make him taste the punishment of the blazing fire.) Most commentators have taken this to mean the punishment of Jahannam (Hell) in the hereafter. Some others have said that, in this world as well, Allah Ta'ālā had set an angel upon them who, in case they fell short in obeying Sayyidnā Sulaymān عليه السلام, would beat them with burning lashes and force them to work. (Qurṭubī) The doubt that the Jinns are made of fire after all and the fire would hardly affect them is not worth entertaining here. The reason is that the Jinns are made of fire in the same sense as man is made of dust. It means that the preponderant element of man is dust. Still if man were to be hit by a clod of clay, or stone, it would hurt him. Similarly, the preponderant element of the Jinns is fire. But, pure and potent fire would burn them too.

In verse 13: يَعْمَلُوْنَ لَهٗ مَا يَشَآءُ مِنْ مَّحَارِيْبَ وَتَمَاثِيْلَ وَجِفَانٍ كَالْجَوَابِ وَقُدُوْرٍ رّٰسِيٰتٍ (They used to make for him whatever he wished of castles, images, basins as (large as) tanks and big cook-wares fixed in their places), there is a somewhat detailed description of the jobs Sayyidnā Sulaymān عليه السلام assigned to the Jinns. The word: مَحَارِيْبَ (*maḥarib*, translated above as 'castles') is the plural form of: مِحْرَاب (*miḥrab*) and is used to identify the noblest part of the house. When kings and men of authority make a state operation chamber, sort of power niche for themselves, it is also known as mihrab. Then the word: is a derivation from: حَرْب (*ḥarb*) meaning war. One makes a seat of power for himself, keeps it safe against being approached by others, and should anyone resort to any high-handedness, he would fight against the aggressor. Given this congruity, the special section of a mansion is called mihrab. Then the masajid or mosques as such are, on occasions, referred to as maharib. When reference is made to the maharib of sahabah from among the maḥarib of Banī Isrā'il and Islam, it means their Masajid or mosques.

The injunction of having a separate place for making a Miḥrab in Masajid

As far as the blessed period of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and the rightly-guided Khulafa' is concerned, the custom of making the place where the Imām stands as a separate special unit just did not exist. After the early centuries of Islam, the kings promoted this custom for their security and, among common Muslims, it found currency due to the expedient consideration that the whole row where the Imām stands remains empty. It is in view of the large number of people praying in the congregation of masajid already short on space that only a place for the Imām to stand is made by going in depth toward the wall facing the Qiblah so that full rows could be formed behind him. Since this method did not prevail during the early centuries of Islam, some 'Ulama' have dubbed it as *bid'ah* (innovation in the established religious practice of Islam). Shaykh Jalaluddin as-Suyuṭī has written a regular treatise entitled: I'lam-ul-'Aranib fi Bid'atil-Maḥarib on this issue. However, the correct position in this matter is that, should mihrabs of this nature be made for the convenience of the people praying, and in the best interests of the masjid - without taking it to be the desired Sunnah - then, there is no reason to call it a *bid'ah* (innovation in established religion). Yes, if

this is made to be the desired Sunnah, and whoever does anything against it gets to be censured, then, this excess (*ghuluww*) can make such an action fall under the purview of *bid'ah*.

Ruling

If *miḥrab* is made in the form of a regular place for the Imām to stand and lead the prayers, it is incumbent on the Imām that he stands slightly outside the miḥrab in a manner that his feet remain out of the miḥrab, so that the place in which the Imām and the *muqtadis* (those praying behind the Imām) can be counted as one. Otherwise, reprehensible and impermissible is the situation in which the Imām stands alone in a separate place and the rest of the muqtadis, in another. Some masajid would make a *miḥrab* so spacious that it would be good enough to hold a small row of *muqtadis* within it. In a mihrab such as this, should a row of muqtadis also stand in the *miḥrab* and the Imām stands ahead of them, being fully inside the *miḥrab*, then, because of the Imām and the *muqtadis* being on common grounds, the element of *karahah* (reprehensibility) will no more be there.

The next word: تَمَاثِيل (*tamathīl*, translated above as 'images') is the plural form of: تِمثَال (timthal). It appears in the Arabic Lexicon, al-Qamus, that: تَمثَال (*tamthāl*) with a fathah on the letter: التاء (*ta'*) is a verbal noun, and the word: تِمثَال (*timthal*) with a kasrah on the letter: التاء (*ta'*) denotes a picture. In Aḥkam-ul-Qur'ān, Ibn-ul-'Arabi has said that timthal, that is, a picture is of two kinds: (1) The picture of animate and living things, (2) that of inanimate and lifeless things. After that, inanimate things are further divided in two kinds: (1) Jamad or inorganic in which there is no increase and growth, such as, rock or soil, (2) nami or organic in which increase and growth go on, such as, trees and crops. The Jinns used to make pictures of all kinds of these things for Sayyidnā Sulaymān عليه السلام. To begin with, the very generality of the Qur'ānic word: تَمَاثِيل (*tamathīl*: images) lends support to the view that these pictures were not those of some particular kind, instead, were common to all kinds. Then there are the historical narratives in which the presence of the pictures of birds on the throne of Sayyidnā Sulaymān عليه السلام has also been mentioned.

The prohibition of making and using pictures of the living in Sharī'ah

The cited verse (12) tells us that making and using pictures of the

living was not haram (forbidden) in the Sharī'ah of Sayyidnā Sulaymān ﷺ. But, experience bore out that pictures of people were made among past communities to pay homage to them, then they were put in their houses of worship to serve as reminders of their devotion in the hope that it might enable them too to devote likewise. This did not happen. Gradually, what really happened was that these people made these very pictures the objects of their worship and thus began the worship of idols and icons.

In short, the pictures of the living creatures made in past communities became the conduit of idol-worship. Since it is divinely destined that the Sharī'ah of Islam must stay and survive right through the Day of Judgment, therefore, particular attention has been paid there to block the intrusion of the undesirable. Hence, the way sins and initially haram things have been made unlawful, similarly, their conduits and close causes have also been made unlawful by appending these to main sins and haram things. Of crimes, the real one, and the most serious, happens to be shirk and idol-worship. When this was forbidden, the law of Islam did not leave the ways and means that could smuggle idol-worship in it unchecked. It was boldly and wisely checked when the conduits and close causes of idol-worship were also prohibited. Making and using pictures of the living was made prohibited on this very basis. That it is unlawful stands proved on the authority of the aḥādīth of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, aḥādīth that are sound, authentic, and have been transmitted in an uninterrupted succession.

Similarly, when liquor was made haram, also made haram were its buying and selling, wages to deliver or carry it, and its making, everything about it, being the conduits of drinking. When theft was made haram, the very entry in someone's house without permission, in fact, even peeping in from outside the house was prohibited. When zina (fornication, adultery) was made haram, even casting a look intentionally at a non- mahram was also made haram. Comparable examples of it abound in the Sharī'ah of Islam.

The prohibition of pictures: A common doubt and its answer

It can be said that the use of pictures during the blessed time of the Holy Prophet ﷺ could have become a source of idol-worship. But, in our time, pictures serve many purposes, such as establishing identity of

criminals, advertising trade marks, meeting friends and relatives, investigating events and circumstances and so many other things. For this reason, it has been included in one of the necessities of life. In this, the apprehension of any idol-worship is far too remote to conceive. As such, this prohibition that was made to offset the danger of idol-worship should now be lifted.

Answer to this doubt is that First of all, it is not correct to say that, in our time, pictures are no more a source of idol-worship. Even today, there are so many sects and groups who worship their peers. Then, it is not necessary either that the wisdom behind an operative divine order should be found in every individual case. In addition to that, the sole reason for the prohibition of pictures is not that it is a conduit of idol-worship. In fact, there are Ṣaḥīḥ (sound and authentic) aḥādīth in which other reasons for this prohibition have also been given. For example, picture making is a duplication of the special attribute of Allah Ta'ālā. The name: مصور (musawwir: the giver of form, shape, color and real presence) is one of the most beautiful names of *Allah Subḥanahu wa Ta'ālā,* and making of pictures (and the giving of form, shape and presence) is, in reality, befitting for Him and it lies within His power to create among His creations thousands in terms of genus, race, class, category and kinds with millions and billions of living units in each kind, each different in shape. Take the example of human beings. The form and shape of men is different. So is the form and shape of women. There have been billions of individual men and women. None of them were absolutely like anyone else . The distinct features of every person are so manifest that an onlooker would easily recognize him without much hesitation. Who can claim to give the creatures such marvelous shapes other than Allah Almighty? A human being who makes a picture, or painting, or statue of someone living is claiming, for all practical purposes, that he or she too can make (the same) 'images.' Therefore, it appears in the Ṣaḥīḥ of al-Bukhari and in other aḥādīth that, on the Day of Judgment, those who make pictures will be told: When you have tried to imitate Us, make the imitation perfect too - if you have the power to do so. We did not simply make an image. We have invested it with a spirit too. If you claim to have 'created' it, then, you better put a spirit inside the thing you have 'made'.

Another reason why a picture is prohibited appears in Ṣaḥīḥ aḥādīth

where it is said that the angels of Allah hate pictures and dogs. Angels do not enter the house that has these, because of which, the bliss and radiance of the house is gone, and the ability of the inmates to worship and remain obedient to Allah is reduced. Then, along with it, not so wrong is the well-known saying: خانہ خالی را دیو می گیرد (A vacant house is occupied by demons). So, when some house remains unvisited by angels of mercy, who else but the devils and demons will be all over it staying there to sow scruples of sins first and then give the intention and the courage to fall into them.

Yet another reason appearing in some aḥādīth is that pictures are unnecessary embellishment of this world. Of course, in our time, pictures yield many benefits but thousands of crimes, including those that range between immodesty and pornography, also breed and flourish from these very pictures. In short, it is not simply one reason alone that was made basis for its prohibition, rather, there is a host of reasons why the Sharī'ah of Islam has declared it prohibited to make and use pictures of the living. Now, if we were to suppose that there is some particular person in whom those causes are not found, then, from this stray incidence, the rule of the Sharī'ah cannot change.

According to a narration from Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd ﷺ appearing in the Ṣaḥīḥ of al-Bukhari and Muslim, the Holy Prophet ﷺ has been reported to have said:

اَشَدُّ النَّاسِ عَذَابًا يَّوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ الْمُصَوِّرُوْنَ

Of people the most affected by punishment on the Day of Judgment shall be the makers of pictures.

And in some other narrations of Ḥadīth, the Holy Prophet ﷺ has been reported to have cursed the makers of pictures. Then, a narration from Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ appearing in the two Ṣaḥīḥs of al-Bukhari and Muslim reports that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said:

كُلُّ مُصَوِّرٍ فِى النَّارِ

Every maker of pictures will be in the Jahannam.

This humble writer has put together detailed evidences concerning this issue from the narrations of Ḥadīth and the practice of the early forbears of Islam in his treatise entitled, *At-taswir li-aḥkam-it-taswir.*

Also included in it, there are answers to doubts entertained by people. If needed, please consult.

A photograph is also a picture

Some people argue that a photo is outside the definition of taswir or picture, because it is a shadow, or reflection, as it would appear in mirror or water. So, they would argue, the way it is permissible to look at your self in a mirror, in the same way, a photo picture is also permissible. But this argument is absolutely wrong, because a reflection or shadow is a reflection until it has not been made to last through some device. Take the example of mirror or water. Your reflection in it will be gone once you move away from it. If the reflection of this figure were to be made lasting through the use of some chemical process or device, this very thing will become a picture, the forbiddance and prohibition of which stands proved from aḥādīth appearing in an uninterrupted succession. A detailed discussion relating to the issue of photographs has also been included in my treatise on pictures referred to earlier.

The next word: جِفَان (*jifan*, translated in the text as 'basins') is the plural of: جَفْنَة (*jafnah*) which means a large dish-like pan or tub to hold ample supply of water, and the word: اَلْجَوَاب (*aljawāb*, translated above as 'tanks') in: كَالْجَوَاب (*kaljawāb*) is the plural of: جَابِيَة (*jabiyah*). A small water tank is called: جابیه (jabiyah). The sense is that they would make water-storing utensils so large as would hold water equal to that of a small tank. The first of the next two words: قُدُوْر (*qudur*, translated above as 'cook-wares') is the plural of: قِدْر (*qidr*) which is spelt with the Kasrah of the letter: القاف (*qaf*). It means a pot (to boil or cook. The last of the two words: رَاسِيَات (rasiyat, translated as 'fixed at their place') refers to their state as being set where they were. The sense is that they used to make these cauldrons so huge and heavy that they were virtually immovable - and it is also possible that they would have made these cauldrons fixed on the ovens of solid rock, and therefore they were immovable in that respect. Early Tafsīr authority, Daḥḥāk has given this very explanation of these words.

In verse 13: اِعْمَلُوْا اٰلَ دَاوٗدَ شُكْرًا وَّقَلِيْلٌ مِّنْ عِبَادِيَ الشَّكُوْرُ (Do good, O family of Dāwūd , in thankfulness. And few from My slaves are thankful." [34:13]), after having stated that Sayyidnā Dāwūd and Sulaymān عليهما السلام were particularly blessed by Allah Taʻālā, they and their family and children

have been ordered to remain grateful.

The reality of Shukr (gratitude) and its injunctions

According to Al-Qurṭubī, the reality of *shukr* (gratitude) is that one admits that this blessing has been bestowed by such and such giver and then goes on to use it in consonance with the spirit of his pleasure and in obedience to him. Therefore, using the blessing bestowed by someone counter to his pleasure is ungratefulness and a virtual denial of that blessing. This tells us that the way gratefulness can be in words, it can also be expressed by acts. When expressed by acts, it would mean the use of that blessing in accordance with the pleasure of the giver and in obedience to him. Abu 'Abdur-Rahman As-Sulami has said that Ṣalah is gratitude, fasting is gratitude, and every good deed is gratitude. And Muḥammad Ibn Ka'b al-Qurazi says that gratitude is the name of piety and righteous conduct. (Ibn Kathīr)

In the verse under study, the noble Qur'ān could have used the comparatively brief expression اُشْكُرُوْنِی (ushkuruni: thank Me), but the words used are اِعْمَلُوْا شُكْرًا. Perhaps this expression is adopted to release the hint that the gratitude expected from the House of Dāwūd was gratitude in practice. (The translation in the text has taken care of this hint by saying, 'Do good....')

This injunction was carried out so faithfully by Sayyidnā Dāwūd and Sulaymān عليهما السلام and their families and children, both in word and deed, that no time passed in their homes when they did not have an individual member of the family standing exclusively devoted to worship. In fact, specific time was allotted to all family members for this purpose. As a result, the prayer mat of Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام would not remain unoccupied at any time by one or the other maker of prayer. (Ibn Kathīr)

According to Ḥadīth in al-Bukhari and Muslim, the Holy Prophet ﷺ said that the dearest prayer to Allah is that of Dāwūd عليه السلام. He would sleep half of the night, stand in worship for one third of it, and then, sleep during the last one sixth. And the dearest fasts to Allah are the fasts of Dāwūd عليه السلام, for he would fast on alternate days. (Ibn Kathīr)

It has been reported from Fuḍayl رحمه الله تعالى that following the revelation of this command of gratitude to Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام, he submitted before Allah Ta'ālā: 'O my Lord, how could I show my gratitude

to You fully and sufficiently while my gratitude too, be it oral or practical, is nothing but a blessing bestowed by You? On this too, a separate gratitude becomes due.' Allah Ta'ālā said, اَلآنَ شَكَرْتَنِی یَادَاوٗدُ (Now, O Dāwūd, you did thank Me). The reason was that he had realized his inability to thank Him as was His due, and had made a confession to that effect.

Tirmidhī and Abu Bakr al-Jaṣṣāṣ report from Sayyidnā 'Ata' Ibn Yasār ﷺ that when this verse: اِعْمَلُوْٓا اٰلَ دَاوٗدَ شُكْرًا (Do good, O family of Dāwūd , in thankfulness) was revealed, the Holy Prophet ﷺ came to the pulpit, recited this verse and then said, "There are three acts whoever accomplishes them would achieve the same excellence as was bestowed on the House of Dāwūd." The noble Ṣaḥabah asked: "Yā Rasūlallāh, what are those three acts?" He said, "Staying firm on justice in states of pleasure and displeasure both; and taking the path of moderation in states of prosperity and adversity both; and fearing Allah both in private and in public." (Qurṭubī, Aḥkam ul-Qur'ān, al-Jaṣṣāṣ)

In the last sentence of verse 13: وَقَلِيْلٌ مِّنْ عِبَادِیَ الشَّكُوْرُ, soon after having given the command for gratitude with special emphasis, the reality on ground was also pointed to by saying that 'And few from My slaves are thankful.' which is an admonition for a believer, and an incitement to observe gratitude.

The word: مِنسَأَ (*minsa'ah*, translated in the text as 'sceptre') in verse 14 beginning with: فَلَمَّا قَضَيْنَا عَلَيْهِ الْمَوْتَ (So, when We decided (that) death (should come) upon him, - 14) appears in the sense of staff or pole (as of purpose or authority). Some early commentators have said that it is a word taken from the Ethiopian language and denotes staff. Others have said that it is an Arabic word from: نَسَاء (*nasa'*) which means move back, drive away, postpone. Since a staff or stick is used to remove things undesirable or harmful, therefore, it was called: مِنسَأَة : '*minsa'ah*,' that is, the device to remove. By describing the circumstances of Sayyidnā Sulaymān's unusual death, the text has opened a gateway of many lessons and gems of guidance.

The strange event of the death of Sayyidnā Sulaymān عليه السلام

The elements of guidance embedded in this event are many. For example, Sayyidnā Sulaymān عليه السلام was a ruler having such an unmatched state at his command that ruled not simply over the world of

his time, but over the Jinns and birds and the wind as well. Yet, despite all these assets at his command, he too had no escape from death, and that it had to come only when the time was appointed for it to come. The construction of Baytul-Maqdis started by Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام and completed by Sayyidnā Sulaymān عليه السلام had part of it still unfinished. This construction job was entrusted with the Jinns. They were contumacious by nature but kept working in fear of Sayyidnā Sulaymān عليه السلام. If they were to find out that he had died, they would have stopped working instantly and the structure would have been left incomplete. With the leave of Allah, Sayyidnā Sulaymān عليه السلام made appropriate arrangements to offset this situation. So, when came the time of his death, he got ready for it and entered the *mihrab* (seat of authority in the palace) which was made of sparking transparent glass. His presence could be clearly seen from outside. As was his routine, he stood there in a stance of worship slightly supported by his scepter, so that, once his soul departs (when he dies), the body remains poised at its place with the support of his staff. The soul of Sayyidnā Sulaymān عليه السلام was taken away at the appointed hour, but he kept firmly reclining on his staff and from the outside it appeared as if he was engrossed in worship. In that state, Jinns would not dare come close and peek at him. They kept working under the impression that Sayyidnā Sulaymān was alive. Thus passed a full year and when the remaining work on Baytul-Maqdis was complete, Allah Ta'ālā empowered the termite, (which is referred to by the Qur'ān as دابة الارض (*dābbatul-arḍ*: a creature of the earth), to occupy the staff of Sayyidnā Sulaymān عليه السلام. The termite ate out the wood and weakened the staff. When the staff was gone, Sayyidnā Sulaymān عليه السلام fell down. That was the time when the Jinns came to know about his death.

Allah Ta'ālā has given the Jinns the capability of traversing very long distances within moments. They used to be aware of many circumstances and events not known by human beings. When they would communicate this information to human beings, they took it to be news from the unseen surmising that the Jinns too possess the knowledge of the unseen ('ilm-ul-ghaib). Moreover, the possibility that the Jinns themselves had a claim of possessing the knowledge of the unseen cannot be ruled out. But, this unusual incidence of death unfolded the reality of all that. The Jinns themselves found out - and human beings too - that the Jinns are no

possessors of the knowledge of the unseen. Because, had that been the case and had they been aware of the workings of the unseen, they would have come to know about the death of Sayyidnā Sulaymān عليه السلام more than a year ago, and would have been spared of the hard labor they went on doing on the assumption that he was alive. This is what has been stated in the last sentence of the verse:

فَلَمَّا خَرَّ تَبَيَّنَتِ الْجِنُّ اَنْ لَّوْ كَانُوْا يَعْلَمُوْنَ الْغَيْبَ مَا لَبِثُوْا فِى الْعَذَابِ الْمُهِيْنِ

So, when he fell down, the Jinns came to know that if they had the knowledge of the Unseen, they would not have stayed (so long) in the humiliating punishment. (34:14).

Here, the expression: اَلْعَذَابِ الْمُهِيْنِ (*al-'adhabil-muhīn*: humiliating punishment) refers to the hard labor they had to do in completing the edifice of Baytul-Maqdis under the orders of Sayyidnā Sulaymān عليه السلام. Part of this unusual event of the death of Sayyidnā Sulaymān عليه السلام has been mentioned in this very verse of the Qur'ān while its details have been reported from several Tafsīr authorities, including Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه, and are there in Ibn Kathīr and all other Tafsīrs.

From this unusual event, we also learn the essential lesson that there is no escape from death for anyone and also that Allah Ta'ālā can, when He decides to have someone do something, arrange to have it done the way He wills. This is exactly as it happened during the course of this event when Sayyidnā Sulaymān عليه السلام was kept, despite his death, standing at his place and the Jinns were made to complete the work assigned to them. This event also shows that all causes and instruments of the whole world keep fulfilling their function until such time as Allah would let them do so. When He would not let them do so, causes and instruments fail, like the support of the staff here that was terminated through the termite. Moreover, soon after the death of Sayyidnā Sulaymān عليه السلام, there existed the danger that people, who notice the astonishing performance of the Jinns and come across their apparently unbelievable access to things unseen, might take them as their objects of worship. This danger was also eliminated by this event of death. Everyone came to know that the Jinns were really unaware and helpless in this matter.

From this submission, it becomes clear that Sayyidnā Sulaymān عليه السلام had adopted this particular mode at the time of his death for two reasons: (1) That the remaining work on the construction of Baytul-Maqdis gets to be completed. (2) That people find out the truth about the Jinns, realize that they were really unaware and helpless, and thus there remains no danger of Jinns being taken by them as objects of veneration and worship. (Qurṭubī)

According to a narration of Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Amr رضي الله عنه reported by Imām Nasa'ī with sound chains of authority, the Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "When Sulaymān عليه السلام accomplished the building of Baytul-Maqdis, he made some prayers that were answered. One of these was: O Allah, whoever enters this *masjid* with the sole intention of making Ṣalah (and having no other worldly motive), purify him before he goes out of this masjid, from all his sins (making him) as pure as he was when born from the womb of his mother."

And in the narration of Suddiyy, it also appears that soon after Sayyidnā Sulaymān عليه السلام was finished with the building of Baytul-Maqdis, he sacrificed twelve thousand cows and heifers and twenty thousand goats as a token of thanksgiving and declared the feast open to all. Celebrating the day as a day of rejoicing, he stood on the Sakhrah of Baytul-Maqdis praying: O Allah, it is You who bestowed this power, and all these resources, on me by virtue of which the edifice of Baytul-Maqdis reached its completion. Now, also give me the ability to thank you for this blessing; and give me death while adhering to the faith you chose for me; and once you have given me right guidance, let there come no crookedness or deviation in it." And he further supplicated, "O my Lord, for a person who enters this masjid, I ask you of five things:

(1) Accept the repentance of a sinner who enters this masjid to confess and repent, and forgive his sins.

(2) Guarantee peace for a person who enters this masjid to remain safe from fear and danger, and deliver him from all dangers.

(3) Heal the sick person who enters this masjid.

(4) Make the poor person who enters here need-free.

(5) Let Your mercy be on the person who enters it as long as he

remains here - except a person who is busy doing something unjust or faithless. (Qurṭubī)

This Ḥadīth tells us that the work of building Baytul-Maqdis was already completed during the lifetime of Sayyidnā Sulaymān عليه السلام. But, the event mentioned above is really not contrary to the possibility that there remained some construction work left out even after the completion of the main building, as is usually done in the case of such huge projects. May be, Sayyidnā Sulaymān عليه السلام had devised the plan mentioned above for the completion of the remaining work.

It has also been reported from Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه that Sayyidnā Sulaymān عليه السلام kept standing for a year supported by his staff, even after his death. (Qurṭubī) And according to some narrations, when the Jinns found out that a long time had passed since the death of Sayyidnā Sulaymān عليه السلام while they had remained in the dark all along, they tried to determine the time of his death, and for that purpose, they went for an experiment. They released a termite on a piece of wood. Thus, from whatever of the wood was eaten by the termite in one day and night, they calculated that a year had passed over the staff of Sayyidnā Sulaymān in that state.

Special Note

Citing historians, al-Baghawi has said that Sayyidnā Sulaymān عليه السلام lived for fifty- three years and ruled for forty years. He had succeeded to the throne at the age of thirteen years and had started building Baytul-Maqdis in the fourth year of his reign. (Maẓharī, Qurṭubī)

Verses 15 - 19

لَقَدْ كَانَ لِسَبَاٍ فِىْ مَسْكَنِهِمْ اٰيَةٌ ۚ جَنَّتٰنِ عَنْ يَّمِيْنٍ وَّشِمَالٍ ۖ كُلُوْا
مِنْ رِّزْقِ رَبِّكُمْ وَاشْكُرُوْا لَهٗ ۗ بَلْدَةٌ طَيِّبَةٌ وَّرَبٌّ غَفُوْرٌ ﴿١٥﴾
فَاَعْرَضُوْا فَاَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ سَيْلَ الْعَرِمِ وَبَدَّلْنٰهُمْ بِجَنَّتَيْهِمْ جَنَّتَيْنِ
ذَوَاتَىْ اُكُلٍ خَمْطٍ وَّاَثْلٍ وَّشَىْءٍ مِّنْ سِدْرٍ قَلِيْلٍ ﴿١٦﴾ ذٰلِكَ جَزَيْنٰهُمْ
بِمَا كَفَرُوْا ۗ وَهَلْ نُجْزِىْٓ اِلَّا الْكَفُوْرَ ﴿١٧﴾ وَجَعَلْنَا بَيْنَهُمْ وَبَيْنَ

الْقُرَى الَّتِيْ بٰرَكْنَا فِيْهَا قُرًى ظَاهِرَةً وَّقَدَّرْنَا فِيْهَا السَّيْرَ ۭ سِيْرُوْا فِيْهَا
لَيَالِيَ وَاَيَّامًا اٰمِنِيْنَ ﴿۱۸﴾ فَقَالُوْا رَبَّنَا بٰعِدْ بَيْنَ اَسْفَارِنَا وَظَلَمُوْٓا
اَنْفُسَهُمْ فَجَعَلْنٰهُمْ اَحَادِيْثَ وَمَزَّقْنٰهُمْ كُلَّ مُمَزَّقٍ ۭ اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ
لَاٰيٰتٍ لِّكُلِّ صَبَّارٍ شَكُوْرٍ ﴿۱۹﴾

There was indeed a sign for (the community of) Saba' in their home-land: two gardens, on the right and on the left." Eat of the provision from your Lord, and be grateful to Him-- (You have) a good city, and a Most-Forgiving Lord." [15] **Then they turned away. So We released over them the flood of the dam, and replaced their two gardens with two gardens having fruits of bitter taste, and tamarisk and some of the lot-trees.** [16] **Thus We punished them because of their ungratefulness. And We do not give (such a) punishment but to the ungrateful.** [17] **And We had made towns to be seen between them and between the towns in which We had placed Our blessings, and had measured the journey between them: " Travel along them at nights and days peacefully."** [18] **Then they said," Our Lord, make (the phases of) our journeys more distant." And they wronged themselves, therefore We turned them into stories and tore them into pieces. Surely in this, there are signs for everyone who is ever- patient, fully grateful.** [19]

Commentary

In previous verses, warning was given to those who denied prophethood and the Day of Judgment and failed to realize that the power of Allah Ta'ālā was most perfect. Reference was then made to miracles shown at the hands of past prophets and mention was made of the events relating to Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام and Sayyidnā Sulaymān عليه السلام. Now the text mentions the limitless blessings bestowed on the people of Saba' who were later punished because of their ungratefulness.

The people of Saba' and the particular blessings of Allah upon them

Ibn Kathīr has said that Saba' is the title of the kings and citizens of Yemen. Tababi'ah (plural of *tubba'*) who ruled this country were these very people of Saba', and Queen Bilquīs who has been mentioned along

with Sayyidnā Sulaymān ﷺ in Sūrah An-Naml was also from among these people. Allah Ta'ālā had opened the doors of His blessing on them providing their state with all conceivable comforts. Against these blessings they were asked to believe in one God and obey His commandments and thus be grateful for blessings bestowed on them. For a certain period of time, these people stayed straight with their mandate and kept enjoying ease and comforts. Then came the time when they became so engrossed in the good things of life they were blessed with that they started touching the limits of negligence, even denial. Then Allah Ta'ālā sent thirteen of His prophets to warn them. They did their best to admonish them and bring them round to the straight path. But, these people kept persisting with their attitude of negligence. Then came the consequence. A flood was sent over them, a punishment that devastated their once flourishing city of gardens. (Reported by Muḥammad Ibn Isḥāq - Ibn Kathīr)

Imām Aḥmad reports from Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ that someone asked the Holy Prophet ﷺ if Saba' mentioned in the Qur'ān was the name of a man, woman or some country. The Holy Prophet ﷺ said: This is the name of a man who had ten sons among his progeny. Out of these, six remained settled in Yemen and four migrated to Syria. The names of those who lived in Yemen were: Mudhhij, Kindah, Azd, Ash'ari, Anmar, Himyar (from the progeny of these six sons, there came to be six tribes known by those very names).

And the names of those who settled in Syria are: Lakham, Judham, 'Amilah, Ghassan (tribes coming in their lines were known by the same names). This narration has also been reported by Ḥāfiẓ Imām Ibn 'Abd-ul-Barr in his book, al-Qasd wa al-Amam bi Ma'arifati Ansab-il-'Arab wa-l-'Ajam.

According to Ibn Kathīr's research with reference to scholars of genealogy, these ten sons were not directly from the loins of Saba', rather, they were born in the third or fourth generation of Saba'. After that, their tribes spread out in Syria and Yemen and got to be known by their very names. And the real name of Saba' was 'Abd-ush-Shams. His genealogical tree becomes established by the name Saba' 'Abd Shams son of Yashhab son of Ya'rub son of Qaḥṭan. Historians write that Saba' 'Abd Shams had, during this time, given the glad tidings of the coming of the Last Prophet, Sayyidnā Muḥammad al-Muṣṭafa ﷺ. It is possible that he

came to know about it from early books of the Torah and Injīl, or from astrologers or soothsayers. He has also composed some lines of poetry in Arabic in which he has mentioned his coming and wished to have been during his time and been of some help to him. Then, he has also exhorted his people to believe in him and support him.

As for the statement of the Ḥadīth quoted above in which it is said that out of the ten sons of Saba', six settled in Yemen and four went towards Syria, this event relates to the time after the coming of the punishment of flood against them which means that these people had scattered towards different directions and cities at the time the flood came. (Ibn Kathīr) Quoting Qushairi, al-Qurṭubī has reported that the period of the people of Saba' is after Sayyidnā 'Īsā ﷺ and before the coming of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, and thus it falls in the period known as: فترته (fatrah or gap).

The 'flood of the dam' (sayl al-'arim) and the Dam of Ma'arib (the sadd of Ma'arib)

The word: عرم ('arim) in: فَأَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ سَيْلَ الْعَرِمِ (So We sent to them the flood of the dam - 16) carries several recognized meanings in terms of Arabic lexical usage and the scholars of tafsir have explained this verse in terms of every such meaning. But, the meaning more in consonance with the context of the Qur'ān is the one that appears in the Arabic lexicons like Qāmūs, Ṣiḥaḥ of Jawhari and others, that is, 'arim' means a dam that is made to block water. Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ has also given the meaning of 'arim as dam. (Qurṭubī)

The episode regarding the 'flood of the dam' referred to in this verse, according to the statement of Ibn Kathīr, is that in the country of Yemen, three miles away from its capital, San'a', there was a city by the name of Ma'rib settled in which the people of Saba' used to live. The city was located in between two mountains. Water from rains used to come from the two mountains, leaving the city inundated. The city had the reputation of being a target of such deluges. Rulers of the city (of those, Queen Bilquis has been mentioned particularly) built a strong and fortified dam between these two mountains, a dam that would remain unaffected by the flow of water. This dam stopped the serial surges of flooded water that entered from the two mountains and turned the place into a great big storage of water. Even the water from rains falling on the

mountains started flowing in there. Provided inside this dam, there were three gates at appropriate levels , so that this storage of water could be released systematically for people of the city to irrigate their farms and gardens. To accomplish this objective, they would first open the topmost gate and use water as needed. When no water remained at that level, they would open the gate in the middle and after that came the turn of the third and last gate until came the time of rains next year, and the whole dam would stand filled to the brim all over again. Then, engineered and built under the dam, there was a huge big tank in which twelve outlets of water were provided to supply water to twelve canals serving different parts of the city with water flowing in all canals uniformly and was used to take care of various needs of the city. (Maẓharī)

The slopes of the two mountains to the right and left of the city were landscaped with rows of gardens fed by canals of water. These gardens stood adjacent to each other in two continuous rows by the slopes of the mountains. Though many in number, but the Qur'ān identified them as: جَنَّتَانِ (*jannatan*: Two gardens) because it has taken all the gardens in one row to be one due to their proximity, and then all the gardens on the other side as the other garden.

Trees and fruits of all sorts used to grow in these gardens so abundantly that, according to the statement of the leading early authority, Qatadah, and others, a woman would walk with an empty basket perched on her head, and it would automatically get filled with fruits falling off from the trees without the least need to make use of her hands. (Ibn Kathīr)

The second sentence of verse 15: كُلُوْا مِنْ رِّزْقِ رَبِّكُمْ وَاشْكُرُوْا لَهٗ ؕ بَلْدَةٌ طَيِّبَةٌ وَّرَبٌّ غَفُوْرٌ (Eat of the provision from your Lord, and be grateful to Him-- (You have) a good city, and a Most-Forgiving Lord - 34:15) means that Allah Ta'ālā had ordered them through His prophets that they should make use of their extended means of livelihood provided by Allah Ta'ālā and continue to be grateful to Him through their good deeds and unfailing obedience to Divine injunctions, for He had made that city of theirs a really good city. It had a moderate climate without any extremes of heat or chill, so healthy, clean and bracing - to the extent that there was no trace of any hurting life forms like mosquitoes, flies, fleas, snakes and scorpions anywhere throughout the city. In fact, when travelers from outside would

reach the city - having lice or other harmful parasites in their clothes - these would die off naturally as soon as they arrived there (Ibn Kathīr)

At the end of the verse (15), by adding: بَلْدَةٌ طَيِّبَةٌ (a good city) along with رَبٌّ غَفُورٌ (a Most Forgiving Lord), reference to divine blessings has been made all the more perfect by suggesting that 'this good life is not restricted to the life of the present world, in fact, should you remain consistent with your gratefulness, the promise of greater and more everlasting blessings of the Hereafter also holds good. The reason is simple. He is the creator and master-dispenser of all blessings and the one who sustains you - and should you, at one or the other time, inadvertently fail to be grateful or betray by negligence or shortcoming, Allah Ta'ālā is a great forgiver too and will forgive your shortcomings.'

In verse 16, it was said: فَأَعْرَضُوا فَأَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ سَيْلَ الْعَرِمِ (Then they turned away. So We released over them the flood of the dam). In other words, 'when the people of Saba' flouted the commandments of Allah through their contumacy and rebellion, despite having such blessings and despite having been warned by the noble prophets, We released a flood from the dam over them.' We already know that 'arim means a dam. This flood was attributed to 'arim for the reason that this very 'arim, a source of security and prosperity, was transformed by Allah Ta'ālā into a source of calamity for them. According to an account of the event given by Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ, Wahb Ibn Munnabih, Qatādah, Dahhak and other early Tafsīr authorities, when Allah Ta'ālā decided to undo the dam of Ma'rib (*'arim*) and punish and destroy these people through a flood, blind rats were set upon this great *dam*, who weakened its foundation and made it hollow. When came the time of rains and the flooding of water, the pressure of water broke through the already weakened foundation creating gaps and crevices in the dam. Ultimately, the water collected behind the dam ran over the entire valley in which this city of Ma'rib was located. Houses collapsed. Trees were uprooted. The water feeding the twin rows of gardens by the mountain slopes was dried up.

It appears in the report of Wahb Ibn Munabbih that it was already predicted in the books of these people that rats will destroy this *dam*. When people saw rats near the dam, they were alerted by the danger. As a defensive measure, a large number of cats were released under the dam in the hope that they would stop the rats from coming close to the dam.

But, when came the divine decree, the rats overcame the cats and entered into the foundation of the dam.

Then there are historical narratives that also say that as soon as some smart and far-sighted people saw the rats, they decided to leave the place and move to somewhere else. In fact, they made the necessary arrangements and got out of there one by one. Others stayed. But, once came the flood, they too shifted. However, there were many who were swallowed by the flood. In short, the whole city was destroyed. Some details about residents of the city who had migrated to towns in other countries have been given in the Ḥadīth of the Musnad of Aḥmad appearing earlier. Six of their tribes were scattered in Yemen, four in Syria and some of these very tribes came to be the forerunners of the larger population of Madīnah-at-Ṭaiyyibah. Related details appear in books of history.

What happened to the twin rows of gardens after the coming of flood and the destruction of the city? This has been stated in the second sentence of verse 16 as: وَبَدَّلْنٰهُمْ بِجَنَّتَيْهِمْ جَنَّتَيْنِ ذَوَاتَىْ اُكُلٍ خَمْطٍ وَّاَثْلٍ وَّشَیْءٍ مِّنْ سِدْرٍ قَلِيْلٍ (and replaced their two gardens with two gardens having fruits of bitter taste, and Tamarisk and some of the lot-trees), that is, their trees that yielded fruit having good taste were replaced by trees that bore fruit having an evil taste. As for the word: خَمْط (Khamt), most commentators take it to mean the arak (a pungent, thorny desert tree). The lexicographer, Jawhari says that there is a kind of arak which bears some fruit and which is eaten. But, the fruit that grew on this tree was bad in taste. And 'Abu 'Ubaidah ﷺ said that every tree that is thorny and of bitter taste is called: خَمْط (*khamt*). The next word: اَثْل (*athl*) means a kind of tree that is also known in Arabic as : طرفاء (*ṭurfa'*) according to the majority of commentators and both are generally equated with tamarisk in English. No fruit it bears is worth eating. Some commentators said that 'athl' in the sense of samr (Mimosa, Egyptian thorn) or babul or kikar, (Acacia Arabica found in the sub-continent) is a thorny tree the fruit of which is fed to goats.

The word: سِدْر (*sidr*) means beri or ber in Urdu and is translated in English as the lote-fruit or lotus tree in English. Sidr is of two kinds. The one planted on farms bears fruits of pleasant taste (something close to crunchy pears) and carries more of fruits and less of thorns. The other

kind is wild and grows in the form of thorny shrubs and trees with more thorns and less fruits that are bitter as well. At this place, the use of the word: قليل (*qalil*: little, some) along with (sidr: *bair* or lote) perhaps indicates that this too was wild which bears less fruit and is bitter. Allah knows best.

The next verse: ذٰلِكَ جَزَيْنٰهُمْ بِمَا كَفَرُوْا (Thus We punished them because of their ungratefulness.- 34:17) means that they were punished because they committed kufr. Kufr has two meanings. It could mean ungratefulness and it could mean the denial of the true faith. At this place, both meanings can be applied because they did both. They were ungrateful and they rejected the thirteen prophets sent to them.

Special Note

There are two things here that are likely to raise a question. It has been said earlier that Allah Ta'ālā had sent thirteen prophets to the people of Saba'. Then, it has also been stated above that the event relating to these people and the flood of 'arim or dam transpired during the interim period after Sayyidnā 'Īsā عليه السلام and before Sayyidnā Muḥammad al-Muṣṭafa ﷺ called the period of fatrah or gap. During this period, according to the majority of Muslim scholars, simply no prophet was sent which is the reason why it is called the period of fatrah or gap. If so, the question is, how can the coming of these thirteen prophets be held as correct? An answer to this appears in Rūḥ ul-Ma'ānī. There it is said that from the event of the flood of the dam ('arim) being in the period of fatrah or gap, it does not become necessary that these prophets too came during that very period. It is possible that the coming of the prophets to these people dates back prior to the period of fatrah or gap while their contumacy and hostility to faith may have increased during the period of fatrah whereupon the punishment of the flood from the dam was sent upon them in the period of fatrah. Allah knows best.

The word: كَفُوْر (*kafur*) in the second sentence of verse 17: وَهَلْ نُجٰزِیْٓ اِلَّا الْكَفُوْرَ (And We do not give (such a) punishment but to the ungrateful - 34:17) is an emphatic form of: كَافِر (kafir) which means one who is very ungrateful or is an absolute disbeliever. As such, the verse could be taken to mean: 'We do not punish anyone other than the one who is very ungrateful or is an absolute disbeliever.' This, quite obviously, is counter to all those verses of the Qur'ān and sound aḥādīth which prove that

Muslim sinners will also receive the punishment of Jahannam (Hell) to the measure of their deed - even though, finally, once they have gone through their punishment, they will be taken out of the Jahannam because of their 'Īmān or faith and admitted into Jannah (Paradise). To resolve this difficulty, it has been said that it does not signify punishment in some absolute sense, instead, it means a mass punishment as was sent over the people of Saba'. This one is particular to disbelievers. Such punishment does not befall Muslim sinners. (Rūḥ ul-Ma'ānī)

This finds support in the saying of a Ta'bai Ibn Khiyarah. He said,'جَزَاءُ الْمَعْصِيَةِ الْوَهْنُ فِى الْعِبَادَةِ وَالضِّيقُ فِى الْمَعِيْشَةِ وَالتَّعَسُّرُ فِى اللَّذَّةِ قَالَ لَايُصَادِفُ لَذَّةً حَلَالًا اِلاَّ جَآءَه مَنْ ينغصه إيّاها (The punishment of sin is that the sinning person becomes sluggish in acts of worship (*'ibādah*) his economic conditions becomes straitened, and enjoyment (itself) becomes hard to bear...' Ibn Khiyarah explained the latter part of his statement by saying, 'When one is blessed with something *ḥalāl* he can enjoy, there comes one or the other reason which spoils this enjoyment'. (Ibn Kathīr) This tells us that the punishments given to Muslim sinners are of this nature. No open punishment hits them either from the heavens or from beneath the earth. That is particular to disbelievers.

And sage Ḥasan al-Baṣri said: صَدَقَ اللّٰهُ الْعَظِيْمُ لَايُعَاقَبُ بِمِثْلِ فِعْلِهٖ اِلاَّ الْكَفُوْر ('Great is Allah and He said it right: The punishment of an evil deed exactly in proportion to it is not given to anyone but the *kafur'* - someone very ungrateful or absolutely disbelieving). (Ibn Kathīr) This is because a believer, who is no *kafur*, receives some concession with respect to his or her sins as well.

An interpretation of the sense of this verse appears in Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī with reference to Kashf. There it is said that the statement is made in its real sense. Punishment as punishment is given only to a disbeliever and whatever pain is caused to a believing sinner through things like fire is only an apparent punishment. In reality, the purpose is to cleanse him from sin. This is like heating up gold in a furnace. The purpose is to remove its unwanted sediments. This holds true in the case of a believer as well. If he too is put in Jahannam as a consequence of some sin of his, it will be to burn out those elements of his body that have grown on him from consuming what is haram. Once this is taken care of, he is ready to go to Jannah and it does not take much time that he is taken out of

Jahannam (Hell) and admitted into the Paradise (Jannah).

In verse 18, it was said: وَجَعَلْنَا بَيْنَهُمْ وَبَيْنَ الْقُرَى الَّتِي بٰرَكْنَا فِيهَا قُرًى ظَاهِرَةً وَّقَدَّرْنَا فِيهَا السَّيْرَ..... (And We had made towns to be seen between them and between the towns in which We had placed Our blessings, and had measured the journey between them: "Travel along them at nights and days peacefully. - 18") This verse mentions yet another blessing Allah Ta'ālā had bestowed on the people of Saba'. Then it goes on to refer to the ungratefulness of those people who acted ignorantly and chose to ask for a reversal of this blessing by praying that the thing be made harder and more challenging for them. The statement: الْقُرَى الَّتِي بٰرَكْنَا فِيهَا (towns in which We had placed Our blessings) in this verse probably means the rural areas of the country of Syria, because the reference to the descent of mercy in several verses of the Qur'ān is specifically related to that country. The sense of the verse is that Allah Ta'ālā had made their travels to the towns of Syria very easy for them during their trips they had to undertake for their business. Given the conditions that prevailed in the world of that time, the travel distance between the city of Ma'arib and the country of Syria was fairly long with routes being uneven. In view of this difficulty, Allah Ta'ālā had blessed the people of Saba' by having made for their convenience a series of towns at intermittent distances all the way from the city of Ma'arib to the country of Syria.

These habitations were close by the main road, therefore, these were called: قَدَّرْنَا فِيهَا السَّيْرَ (had measured the journey between them). These habitations appearing one after the other were a source of convenience for weary travelers. If a traveler from one of them left home in the morning, he had the choice of reaching some other town on his way, stop there, have lunch or take rest as he wished and could leave after Zuhr and reach the next stage by sundown and spend the night there. The sentence: سِيرُوا فِيهَا لَيَالِيَ وَأَيَّامًا اٰمِنِينَ (Travel along them at nights and days peacefuly - 18) means that these habitations were made at distances that were balanced and equal so that they would reach from one to the other within a fixed time.

In the last sentence of verse 18: (Travel along them at nights and days peacefully.), mention has been made of a third blessing bestowed on the people of Saba'. It means that these settlements were located at such equal and balanced distances that a traveler would be able to cover them

in almost identical time. Then the routes were secure. Theft and highway robbery were unknown. One could travel at any time of the night or day without any hesitation or concern.

Verse 19 opens with the statement: فَقَالُوْا رَبَّنَا بٰعِدْ بَيْنَ اَسْفَارِنَا وَظَلَمُوْٓا اَنْفُسَهُمْ فَجَعَلْنٰهُمْ اَحَادِيْثَ وَمَزَّقْنٰهُمْ كُلَّ مُمَزَّقٍ (Then they said," Our Lord, make (the phases of) our journeys more distant." And they wronged themselves, therefore We turned them into stories and tore them into pieces - 34:19). It means that so unjust were these people that they would go to the extent of dismissing the very blessing of Allah placed there to eliminate the hardships of travel, rather went deeper into their lack of recognition and straight ungratefulness by coming forward to pray that their Lord makes the distances they cover in travel longer - hoping that the habitations do not appear at such close distances, and wishing to see some hard areas of a forest or wilderness which ask for some rough traversing as well. Their case was similar to that of the Bani Isra'il. They used to get the excellent sustenance of mann and salwa, all free of cost. Bored with it, they asked Allah to replace it with vegetables and greens. In return for their ungratefulness and lack of recognition for blessings, Allah Taʻālā released the punishment on them that has been called the flood of the dam earlier. The ultimate consequence of this very punishment has been stated in this verse in strong words, that is, they were virtually expunged from this world leaving nothing but idle tales of their wealth and luxury.

The word: مَزَّقْنٰهُمْ (*mazzaqnahum*) is a derivation from: تَمْزِيْق (*tamziq*) which means to tear and scatter (a people) or to destroy (a kingdom). The sense is that some of the inhabitants of this city of Maʻarib were destroyed on the spot and some others were scattered in a manner that small groups of them spread out to various countries. This destruction and scattering away of the people of Saba' became proverbial in Arabia. On such occasions, there is an Arab idiom: تَفَرَّقُوْا اَيَادِيْ سَبَا that is, these people got scattered away as were the luxury-laden people of the Saba'.

Ibn Kathīr and other commentators have reported a long narrative about a soothsayer who had come to know about the coming of the punishment of the flood a little before it actually did. He made a swift and unique plan. First of all, he sold his entire property. When he had the money in his hands, he told his people about the coming flood and exhorted them to get out of the area immediately. He also told them that

those who intend to shift to a safe far-away place should go to 'Amman, and those who have a taste for liquor, pita bread and fruits should move to Busra in the country of Syria, and those who would settle for rides that go through mud, come handy during the time of famine and prove efficient when dashing on a journey, should go to Yathrib (Madīnah) which abounds in dates. His people followed his advice. The tribe of Azd went towards 'Amman, the Ghassān to Busra in the country of Syria and the Aws and Khazraj and Banū 'Uthmān started off in the direction of Yathrib, the home of date palms. After reaching Batn Murr, Banū 'Uthman liked the place and settled right there. Because of this divergence, Banū 'Uthmān were given the title of Khuza'ah. Batn Murr is closer to Makkah al-Mukarramah where they had chosen to settle down. As for Aws and Khazraj, they reached Yathrib and stayed there. After the long narrative in Ibn Kathīr, the same detail about people scattering to different places has been reported on the authority of Sa'id from Qatadah from al-Sha'bi. Thus, says Ibn Kathīr, these people of Saba' were shredded into pieces, people who have been mentioned in: مَزَّقْنَاهُمْ كُلَّ مُمَزَّقٍ (We torn them into pieces).

The concluding statement in verse 19: اِنَّ فِىْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيٰتٍ لِّكُلِّ صَبَّارٍ شَكُوْرٍ (Surely in this, there are signs for everyone who is ever- patient, fully grateful - 34:19) means that there is a great sign and lesson in the rise and fall and in the radical change that hit the life cycle of the people of Saba' for a person who is enduring and grateful at its best, that is, when faced with some distress or pain, one observes patience over it, and when blessed with things of comfort, one is readily grateful for it. This is a life style in which one always comes out a winner. No matter what the state of his life is, he ends up in nothing but pluses, profits and gains. So says a Ḥadīth of Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ﷺ appearing in the Ṣaḥīḥ of al-Bukhari and Muslim where the Holy Prophet ﷺ has been reported to have said:

'Certainly unique is the state of life a true believer is always in. No matter what Allah decrees for him, it turns for him into nothing but good and profitable. If he is blessed in one way or the other or has the desire of his heart fulfilled, he thanks Allah for it and it becomes good and beneficial for him in the Hereafter. And if he suffers from some pain or distress, he bears it with considered patience for which he is rewarded in a

big way and thus, this suffering too, becomes good and beneficial for him' - from Ibn Kathīr.

Some commentators have taken the word: صَبَّار (Ṣabbar: very patient) in the general sense of sabr or patience - which includes remaining firm in all acts requiring obedience as well as abstaining from sins. In the light of this tafsir or explanation, a true believer remains comprehensively attuned to Ṣabr (patience) and shukr (gratitude) under all conditions and then, for that matter, every sabr is shukr and every shukr is sabr. Allah knows best.

Verses 20 - 21

وَلَقَدْ صَدَّقَ عَلَيْهِمْ إِبْلِيسُ ظَنَّهُ فَاتَّبَعُوهُ إِلَّا فَرِيقًا مِّنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ
﴿٢٠﴾ وَمَا كَانَ لَهُ عَلَيْهِم مِّن سُلْطَانٍ إِلَّا لِنَعْلَمَ مَن يُؤْمِنُ بِالْآخِرَةِ
مِمَّنْ هُوَ مِنْهَا فِي شَكٍّ ۗ وَرَبُّكَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ حَفِيظٌ ﴿٢١﴾

And Iblīs has found his assessment true about them. So they followed him, except a group of the believers. [20] **And he did not have any power over them, but for the reason that We should know the one who believes in the Hereafter as distinct from the one who is in doubt about it. And your Lord is Watchful over every thing. And he did not have any power over them, but for the reason that We should know the one who believes in the Hereafter as distinct from the one who is in doubt about it. And your Lord is Watchful over every thing.** [21]

Verses 22 - 27

قُلِ ادْعُوا الَّذِينَ زَعَمْتُم مِّن دُونِ اللَّهِ ۚ لَا يَمْلِكُونَ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ فِي
السَّمَاوَاتِ وَلَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَمَا لَهُمْ فِيهِمَا مِن شِرْكٍ وَمَا لَهُ مِنْهُم
مِّن ظَهِيرٍ ﴿٢٢﴾ وَلَا تَنفَعُ الشَّفَاعَةُ عِندَهُ إِلَّا لِمَنْ أَذِنَ لَهُ ۗ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا
فُزِّعَ عَن قُلُوبِهِمْ قَالُوا مَاذَا ۙ قَالَ رَبُّكُمْ ۗ قَالُوا الْحَقَّ ۚ وَهُوَ الْعَلِيُّ
الْكَبِيرُ ﴿٢٣﴾ قُلْ مَن يَرْزُقُكُم مِّنَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۗ قُلِ اللَّهُ ۙ

وَإِنَّآ أَوْ إِيَّاكُمْ لَعَلَىٰ هُدًى أَوْ فِى ضَلَٰلٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿٢٤﴾ قُل لَّا تُسْـَٔلُونَ
عَمَّآ أَجْرَمْنَا وَلَا نُسْـَٔلُ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٢٥﴾ قُلْ يَجْمَعُ بَيْنَنَا رَبُّنَا ثُمَّ
يَفْتَحُ بَيْنَنَا بِٱلْحَقِّ ط وَهُوَ ٱلْفَتَّاحُ ٱلْعَلِيمُ ﴿٢٦﴾ قُلْ أَرُونِىَ ٱلَّذِينَ
أَلْحَقْتُم بِهِۦ شُرَكَآءَ كَلَّا ط بَلْ هُوَ ٱللَّهُ ٱلْعَزِيزُ ٱلْحَكِيمُ ﴿٢٧﴾

Say." Call upon those whom you claim (to be your gods) beside Allah. They do not possess (any thing) even to the measure of a particle, neither in the heavens nor in the earth. They have no contribution at all in either of the two, and He (Allah) has no helper from among them. [22] **And intercession before Him is of no benefit, but for the one whom He has permitted. (And those who will ask for intercession will remain fearful) Until when fear is removed from their hearts, they will say (to each other), " What did your Lord say?" They say, "the Truth". And He is the High, the Great.** [23] **Say, "Who gives you sustenance from the heavens and the earth?" Say, " Allah. And We or you are either on the right path or in open error."** [24] **Say, "You will not be asked about the sins we committed, and we will not be asked about what you do.** [25] **Say, " Our Lord will assemble us together, then will judge between us with truth. And He is the best Judge, the All-Knowing.** [26] **Say, "Show me the ones whom you have associated with Him as partners. Never! He is but Allah, the Mighty, the Wise."** [27]

Commentary

These verses are meant to prove the falsity of three different types of idol-worshippers. The first group among them, and the most absurd of all, was of the people who believed that these idols, made of stones are the partners of Allah and His associates in all His powers. The beginning part of the verse 22 refutes their presumption by saying, "They do not possess (any thing) even to the measure of a particle...". The second group of them used to believe that these idols are the helpers of Allah in managing affairs of the universe. The last part of Verse 22 deals with this group by saying, "And He (Allah) has no helper from among them." There was a third group of people who did not hold the idols as gods or helpers of god, but they maintained that these idols are so close to Allah that their

intercession is always approved by Him, and whoever has the advantage of their intercession, his desires may well be fulfilled. Verse 23 has refuted this belief by saying, "And intercession before Him is of no benefit, but for the one whom He has permitted." The sense is that their assumption that idols are close to Allah is not correct.They are neither close to Allah, nor do they have any power of intercession before Him. Then the text clarifies that even angels who are close to Allah cannot intercede for anyone without Allah's permission, and even if they are allowed to intercede, it is not easy for them to do that, because of Allah's awe they have in their hearts. The usual way in which they receive a command from Allah is that they become nervous , due to Allah's awe, when they receive it. Then once they return to their normal condition, they ask each other about the command to ensure its correct nature. This is the sense of the later part of Verse 23 where it is said, "Until when fear is removed from their hearts, they will say (to each other), "What did your Lord say?" They say, "the Truth". [1]

As for angels becoming nervous out of awe referred to in verse 22, its full description is given in a report from Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ﷺ appearing in the Ṣaḥīḥ of al-Bukhari. Says the relevant part of the long Ḥadīth report: When a command from Allah Ta'ālā issues forth through the heavens, all angels start flapping their wings in humility and emotional readiness to obey (as if dazed or benumbed of consciousness). When that effect of nervousness, awe and majesty recedes from their hearts, they say: 'What did your Lord say?' Others tell them that He has spoken the truth and that such and such command has come from Him.

And it appears in the Ṣaḥīḥ of Muslim that Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ reports from some Ṣaḥabi that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said, 'When our Rabb, may His name be exalted, gives a command, the angels holding the Divine Throne start reciting tasbih (saying glory) for Him. Hearing the tasbih done by them, angels of the next lower level of the heavens follow suit until this chain of glorification reaches the lowest level that is the firmament of the world (making it a simultaneously recited tasbih by angels from all heavens). Then, they ask the angels who are close to the Throne, 'What did your Lord say?' This they tell them. Then, in the same manner, those of the lower heavens ask those of the upper the same

[1] This part is abridged from Khulasa-e-tafsīr.('Uthmānī)

question until this chain of question and answer extends up to the firmament of the world' - excerpt from a long Ḥadīth. (Maẓharī)

Consideration of the psychology of the addressee in debates and avoidance of any approach that may provoke violent attitude

In verse 24: وَإِنَّآ أَوۡ إِيَّاكُمۡ لَعَلَىٰ هُدًى أَوۡ فِي ضَلَٰلٖ مُّبِينٖ (And We or you are either on the right path or in open error - 34:24), this address is beamed at polytheists and disbelievers. In their case, what was needed was already done. That Allah Ta'ālā was the creator, the master, and all-powerful in the absolute sense was proved decisively and explicitly. That idols and everything else other than Allah was weak and helpless was demonstrated clearly. After having done all this, the occasion demanded that Mushriks are told in clear terms that they were ignorant and astray in bypassing Allah and electing to worship idols and satans. But, the noble Qur'ān has opted for a wonderfully wise form of address, something that should serve as a guidance for all those who are engaged in the mission of da'wah and tabligh or in debates against opponents of Islam and votaries of the false. It will be noticed that the disbelieving adversaries addressed in this verse were not called kafirs, infidels, disbelievers or the ones gone astray. Rather, a change was introduced in the mode and content of the address. The arguments and proofs were already clear. In their presence, no sensible person could say that tauhid (Oneness of Allah or pure monotheism) and shirk (the attribution of partners in the pristine divinity of Allah) are equally true and that the adherents of both are following the truth. Instead of that, it is certain that one of these two is following the path of truth while the other is in error. Now, it is up to you. You think and you decide as to who is on the side of truth. Is it we or is it you? Had the addressee been called a disbeliever or someone who had gone off the track of truth, it could have made him angry. This approach was avoided. In its place, the approach was kept so affectionate and disarming that it would make even the most diehard adversary left with no choice but to consider what was being proposed (from Qurṭubī and Bayān-ul-Qur'ān)

This method of prophetic call, good counsel and good-mannered debate - in line with the command of the Qur'ān: وَجَادِلۡهُم بِٱلَّتِي هِيَ أَحۡسَنُ (*wa jādilhum bil-latī hiya aḥsan*: (and argue with them in the best manners - 16:125) - is something 'Ulama' should keep in sight all the time. Once this

stands ignored, everything done in the fair name of da'wah, tabligh and debate becomes ineffective, rather harmful. As a result, adversaries turn adamant and cling to their error far more firmly.

Verse 28

وَمَا اَرْسَلْنٰكَ اِلَّا كَآفَّةً لِّلنَّاسِ بَشِيْرًا وَّنَذِيْرًا وَّلٰكِنَّ اَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَايَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٢٨﴾

And We did not send you (O prophet,) but to the entire mankind, as a bearer of good news and as a warner, but most people do not know. [28]

Commentary

That Allah is One and that His power is absolute was the subject in previous verses. In the present verse, it is being said that the Holy Prophet ﷺ was sent as the Messenger of Allah to all peoples of the world who are there now or will come in the future.

The word: كَآفَّة (Kaaffah) in: كَآفَّةً لِّلنَّاسِ (Kaaffatal-lin-naas: for all peoples) is used in the sense of making something universal and inclusive of all without the exclusion of anyone from it. The grammatical arrangement of the text required saying: لِلنَّاسِ (lin-naasi kaaffatan: for the people as a whole) because the word: كَآفَّة (kaaffah: all) is grammatically a hal (adverb) relatable to the word نَاس (naas: people). But, in order to put a clear accent on the universality of the mission of the Last Rasūl of Allah, the word: كَآفَّة (Kaaffah: all) was set to come earlier.

The mission of a messenger or prophet assigned to all prophets sent before the Holy Prophet ﷺ was restricted to some particular people and particular geographical area. It is the peculiarity of the Sayyidnā Muḥammad al-Muṣṭafa ﷺ that his prophetic mission is common and open to all peoples of the world. In fact, it is not simply for human beings, but is so for the Jinns as well. And then, it is not just for those who were present during his blessed time, but is universally applicable to all human generations to come right up to the last day of Qiyāmah. And this very fact of the continuity and survival of his mission as prophet and messenger demands that he has to be the Last and Final of the prophets and that no prophet is to come after his appearance. The reason is that

another prophet is sent when the law and teachings of the one before him are distorted or altered. Thus, a second prophet is sent to reform the people and reinstate them according to Allah's pleasure. As for the Sharī'ah of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and that of His own Book, the Qur'ān, right through the last day of Qiyāmah, the responsibility of its protection has already been undertaken by Allah Ta'ālā Himself. Therefore, it will hold on and survive till Qiyāmah in its original state and there would be no need for some other prophet to be sent.

According to a narration of Sayyidnā Jabir رضي الله عنه appearing in the Ṣaḥīḥs of al-Bukhari and Muslim and elsewhere, the Holy Prophet ﷺ has been reported to have said: 'I have been given five things that have not been given to anyone else before me: (1) That Allah Ta'ālā helped me by placing in my person such an awe as it is felt by the people from the distance of a month of travel. (2) That the whole earth has been declared to be a masjid and a purifier for me (in the religious codes of past prophets, their worship used to be performed only in particular places set up as houses of worship. Worship was not allowed outside their appointed prayer places, either in the open or inside homes. For the Muslim community, Allah Ta'ālā made the whole earth a masjid in the sense that Ṣalah can be made everywhere - and in the absence of water not being available or its use being harmful, the dust of the earth was made tahur or purifier so that it could be used to make tayammum which becomes a valid alternate of wudu). (3) That property from the spoils has been made halal for me. Before me, it was not halal for any other community (among whom the rule was to assemble the war spoils collected from the disbelieving adversary and deposit it at an appointed place in the belief that some fire or lightening would descend from the heavens and burn it, and this act of burning would itself be the sign of the acceptance of their religious war. For the Muslim community, distributing the spoils in accordance with the rule enunciated by the Qur'ān and spending it as needed was made permissible). (4) That I was given the station of the Great Intercession (الشفاعت الكبرىٰ : ash-Shafa'ah al-Kubrā) (that is, when no prophet would dare intercede on behalf of others on the fateful plains of the Resurrection [al-hashr], I shall, then, be given the opportunity to intercede). (5) That before me, every prophet was sent to his particular people - I have been sent as a prophet to all peoples of the world. (Ibn Kathīr)

Verses 29 - 33

وَيَقُوْلُوْنَ مَتٰى هٰذَا الْوَعْدُ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ صٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿٢٩﴾ قُلْ لَّكُمْ مِّيْعَادُ
يَوْمٍ لَّاتَسْتَاْخِرُوْنَ عَنْهُ سَاعَةً وَّلَا تَسْتَقْدِمُوْنَ ﴿٣٠﴾ وَقَالَ الَّذِيْنَ
كَفَرُوْا لَنْ نُّؤْمِنَ بِهٰذَا الْقُرْاٰنِ وَلَا بِالَّذِىْ بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ ؕ وَلَوْ تَرٰٓى اِذِ
الظّٰلِمُوْنَ مَوْقُوْفُوْنَ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ ۚۖ يَرْجِعُ بَعْضُهُمْ اِلٰى بَعْضِ ۣالْقَوْلَ ۚ
يَقُوْلُ الَّذِيْنَ اسْتُضْعِفُوْا لِلَّذِيْنَ اسْتَكْبَرُوْا لَوْلَآ اَنْتُمْ لَكُنَّا مُؤْمِنِيْنَ
﴿٣١﴾ قَالَ الَّذِيْنَ اسْتَكْبَرُوْا لِلَّذِيْنَ اسْتُضْعِفُوْٓا اَنَحْنُ صَدَدْنٰكُمْ عَنِ
الْهُدٰى بَعْدَ اِذْ جَآءَكُمْ بَلْ كُنْتُمْ مُّجْرِمِيْنَ ﴿٣٢﴾ وَقَالَ الَّذِيْنَ
اسْتُضْعِفُوْا لِلَّذِيْنَ اسْتَكْبَرُوْا بَلْ مَكْرُ الَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ اِذْ تَاْمُرُوْنَنَآ اَنْ
نَّكْفُرَ بِاللّٰهِ وَنَجْعَلَ لَهٗٓ اَنْدَادًا ؕ وَاَسَرُّوا النَّدَامَةَ لَمَّا رَاَوُا الْعَذَابَ ؕ
وَجَعَلْنَا الْاَغْلٰلَ فِيْٓ اَعْنَاقِ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا ؕ هَلْ يُجْزَوْنَ اِلَّا مَا كَانُوْا
يَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿٣٣﴾

And they say, " When will this promise (of the Day of Judgment) be fulfilled, if you are truthful?" [29] Say," You have the promise of a day from which you can neither be late for a while, nor can you be ahead of it. [30] And those who disbelieve say," We will never believe in this Qur'an, nor in that which was before it." But if you could see when the wrongdoers will be made to stand before their Lord, repulsing words (of blame) to one another! Those who were held as weak will say to the overbearing," Had you not been there, we would have been believers." [31] Those who were overbearing will say to those weak,"Was it we who stopped you from (accepting) guidance after it came to you? Rather, you were guilty. [32] And those weak will say to those overbearing, "But (it was your) intriguing day and night (that stopped us from accepting guidance), when you were directing us to disbelieve in Allah and to set up rivals to Him." And all of them will conceal (their) penitence when they will see the punishment.[1] And We

[1] They will conceal their penitence from each other, so that they may not face embarrassment before others.

will place iron-collars around the necks of those who disbelieved. They will not be recompensed except for what they used to do. [33]

Verses 34 - 38

وَمَآ اَرْسَلْنَا فِىْ قَرْيَةٍ مِّنْ نَّذِيْرٍ اِلَّا قَالَ مُتْرَفُوْهَآ لا اِنَّا بِمَآ اُرْسِلْتُمْ بِهٖ
كٰفِرُوْنَ ﴿٣٤﴾ وَقَالُوْا نَحْنُ اَكْثَرُ اَمْوَالًا وَّ اَوْلَادًا لا وَّمَا نَحْنُ
بِمُعَذَّبِيْنَ ﴿٣٥﴾ قُلْ اِنَّ رَبِّىْ يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَنْ يَّشَآءُ وَيَقْدِرُ وَلٰكِنَّ
اَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٣٦﴾ وَمَآ اَمْوَالُكُمْ وَلَآ اَوْلَادُكُمْ بِالَّتِىْ
تُقَرِّبُكُمْ عِنْدَنَا زُلْفٰٓى اِلَّا مَنْ اٰمَنَ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا ز فَاُولٰٓئِكَ لَهُمْ
جَزَآءُ الضِّعْفِ بِمَا عَمِلُوْا وَهُمْ فِى الْغُرُفٰتِ اٰمِنُوْنَ ﴿٣٧﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ
يَسْعَوْنَ فِىْٓ اٰيٰتِنَا مُعٰجِزِيْنَ اُولٰٓئِكَ فِى الْعَذَابِ مُحْضَرُوْنَ ﴿٣٨﴾

And We did not send a warner to a township, but said those who lived a luxurious life therein," We reject what you have been sent with." [34] **And they said, " We are superior in riches and children, and we are not going to be punished".** [35] **Say, "In fact, my Lord extends provision to whom He wills, and straitens (it for whom He wills),but most of the people do not know".** [36] **And neither your riches nor your children are the things that bring you near Us closely; however, the one who believes and acts righteously (is close to Us). Therefore, such people will have the double reward for what they did, and they will be at peace in the upper chambers (of Paradise).** [37] **As for those who strive against our signs trying to frustrate (them), they will be arraigned into the torment.** [38]

Commentary

The age-old satanic illusion of taking worldly riches and honours as a proof of being loved by Allah

All along the lanes of time since the very beginning, people intoxicated with material wealth and luxury have always opposed the voice of truth and taken a stance of hostility against the prophets and the pious people, except those whom Allah willed otherwise. On top of this,

they also used to argue in favor of their satisfaction with the existing stance against the people of truth by saying: Had Allah disliked our doings and ways, why would He give us wealth, recognition and power in this world? The noble Qur'ān has answered it in several verses taking different approaches. The revelation of the cited verses is also related to an event of this nature which provides an answer to this absurd argument.

It appears in Ḥadīth that, during the period of Jāhiliyah, two persons ran a business in partnership. Then, one of them left the place and went to some coastal area. When the Holy Prophet ﷺ was ordained as prophet, and people in Arabia started talking about it, the former business partner then living in a coastal area wrote a letter to his former business partner in Makkah and asked him about his reaction and the reaction of other people against this person claiming to be a prophet. The former partner in Makkah wrote back telling him that no one from among the Quraish had followed him, except that a few people of no consequence, mostly poor and needy, were going for him. The man of the coast left his business behind, came to Makkah and asked his former partner there to tell him the address of the person who claimed to be a prophet. This coastal friend who used to study old scriptures, such as the Torah and the Evangile, presented himself before the Holy Prophet ﷺ and asked him: 'What is it to which you invite people to come?' He told him about the main elements of his da'wah of Islam. Immediately after having heard the da'wah (call) to Islam in his blessed words, he said: اَشْهَدُ اَنَّکَ رَسُوْلُ اللهِ (*Ashhadu annaka rasūlallāh*: (i.e.'I bear witness that you are, without any doubt, the messenger of Allah'). He asked him: "How did you know this?" He submitted: '[As for your call being true, I understood it through my reason, and then the sign of it was that:] Adherents of all noble prophets who have come earlier have, in the beginning, always been the weak and the meek, the poor and needy, people who did not matter much among those they were sent to.' Revealed thereupon was the verse under study: وَمَا اَرْسَلْنَا فِیْ قَرْیَةٍ مِّنْ نَّذِیْرٍ اِلَّا قَالَ مُتْرَفُوْهَآ... (And We did not send a warner to a township, but said those who lived a luxurious life therein," We reject what you have been sent with." - 34:34) (Ibn Kathīr and Maẓharī)

In this verse, the word: مُتْرَف (*mutraf*, translated above as 'those who lived a luxurious life) has been derived from: تَرَف (*taraf*) which carries the

sense of a life abounding in material assets, ease and comfort. Hence, مُتْرَفِيْنَ (*mutrafin*) denotes rich people of a community (who are arrogant and careless about what is right or wrong) .The Holy Qur'ān is saying in the verse cited above that whenever Allah has sent a messenger, these people intoxicated with their riches and pampered by a life of luxury have always confronted him with a flat denial of his mission.

Quoted in the next verse (35) is their saying: نَحْنُ اَكْثَرُ اَمْوَالاً وَّ اَوْلَادًا وَّمَا نَحْنُ بِمُعَذَّبِيْنَ which, in effect, means: "We are superior in riches and children, and we are not going to be punished - 35". (Obviously, by it, they meant: If we had been deserving of punishment in the sight of Allah Ta'ālā, why would He give us all this wealth and recognition)? The noble Qur'ān gives an answer in the next two verses by saying: قُلْ اِنَّ رَبِّىْ يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَنْ يَّشَآءُ وَيَقْدِرُ... ("In fact, my Lord extends provision to whom He wills, and straitens (it for whom He wills),but most of the people do not know". 34:36] And neither your riches nor your children are the things that bring you near Us closely; however, the one who believes and acts righteously (is close to Us) وَمَا اَمْوَالُكُمْ وَلَا اَوْلَادُكُمْ 34:37). The gist of the answer is that having more wealth and recognition in this world, or not having any, is no proof of someone being acceptable or unacceptable in the sight of Allah. In fact, it is in view of creational considerations that Allah Ta'ālā would give, at least in this world, property and wealth in abundance to whomever He wills, and gives less to whomever He wills. He alone knows the creational consideration behind it. But, taking the abundance of wealth and children to be a proof of being acceptable in the sight of Allah is sheer ignorance because, with Him, the criterion of acceptability, approval, support and pleasure is no other but 'Imān (faith) and good deed. One who does not carry these two assets - no matter how much wealth and how many children one has - these cannot make him or her acceptable in the sight of Allah.

This very subject has been taken up in several other verses of the noble Qur'ān. In Sūrah al-Mu'minun, it was said:

اَيَحْسَبُوْنَ اَنَّمَا نُمِدُّهُمْ بِهٖ مِنْ مَّالٍ وَّبَنِيْنَ نُسَارِعُ لَهُمْ فِى الْخَيْرٰتِ بَلْ لَّا يَشْعُرُوْنَ

Do they think that by consistently providing them with wealth and children, We are accelerating the (real) good things to them? The fact, however, is that they do not understand (the reality) - 23:55,56.

And the reality is that wealth and children that make man negligent of Allah become a curse for him. Then, in a verse of Surah At-Taubah, it was said:

فَلَا تُعْجِبْكَ اَمْوَالُهُمْ وَلَآ اَوْلَادُهُمْ اِنَّمَا يُرِيْدُ اللّٰهُ لِيُعَذِّبَهُمْ بِهَا فِى الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا وَتَزْهَقَ اَنْفُسُهُمْ وَهُمْ كٰفِرُوْنَ

And their wealth and children should not attract you. Allah only wants to punish them with these in this world and that their souls depart while they are disbelievers - 9:85.

In that case, it will end up into the everlasting punishment of the Hereafter. As for punishing through wealth and children right here in this world, it means that they become so involved in and infatuated with wealth and property that they never find the time to think about their ultimate fate or turn towards Allah and 'Ākhirah - the end of which is punishment that will last for ever. Then there are many who have wealth and children both. It is within this world that, for the sake of wealth and children, rather, through the wealth and children, they have to suffer from thousands of distresses and pains. As such, their punishment starts taking effect right from this very world.

According to a narration of Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ﵁, the Holy Prophet ﷺ said: Allah Ta'ālā does not see you or your wealth. He sees your hearts and your deeds - reported by Aḥmad, Ibn Kathīr)

In the last sentence of verse 37: فَاُولٰٓئِكَ لَهُمْ جَزَآءُ الضِّعْفِ بِمَا عَمِلُوْا وَهُمْ فِى الْغُرُفٰتِ اٰمِنُوْنَ (Therefore, such people will have the double reward for what they did, and they will be at peace in the upper chambers (of Paradise).- 34:37), mentioned there is the state of the people of 'Imān (faith) and good deeds for they are the ones acceptable with Allah. Whether or not they are recognized in this world, their return in the Hereafter will be double or manifold. The word: ضِعف (*ḍi'f*) with a kasrah of the letter: ضاد (*ḍād*) is a verbal noun which means 'like a thing' or 'the likes of a thing'. The sense is that the way wealthy people keep amassing their wealth in the worldly life, Allah Ta'ālā would increase the return for His accepted people in the Hereafter many times over. For example, the return for one deed would be ten of its likes, or ten times as much. Then, it is not so restricted either. Granted the person's sincerity in deed and in view of other causes and considerations, the return of one such deed can go up to seven hundred

times. That returns at this high scale would also be given as stands proved from Ṣaḥīḥ aḥādīth. It is interesting that this too is not restricted. It could be more than that. In short, these people of faith and good deed shall be residing in the elevated chambers of Paradise in perfect peace and forever shielded against all sorrows.

The word: غُرُفَات (*ghurufat*) is the plural form of: غُرْفَة (*ghurfah*). It denotes a part of the mansion considered distinct and high as compared to other parts.

Verse 39

قُلْ إِنَّ رَبِّى يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَنْ يَّشَآءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهٖ وَيَقْدِرُ لَهٗ ط وَمَآ أَنْفَقْتُمْ مِّنْ شَىْءٍ فَهُوَ يُخْلِفُهٗ ج وَهُوَ خَيْرُ الرّٰزِقِيْنَ ﴿٣٩﴾

Say, "Surely, my Lord extends provision for whomsoever He wills out of His servants, and straitens (it) for him. And whatever thing you spend, He replaces it. And He is the best of the sustainers. [39]

Commentary

This verse has appeared a little earlier (36) almost in the same words. As obvious, the same thing has been mentioned here, however, it has a difference. At this place, there is an addition of: مِنْ عِبَادِهٖ (out of His servants) after: مَنْ يَّشَاءُ (whomsoever He wills) and: لَهٗ (lahu: for him or whomever) after: يَقْدِرُ (yaqdir: straitens). From the statement: مِنْ عِبَادِهٖ (min 'ibadihi: from His servants), it is gathered that this rule of guidance has been put forth for His particular servants, that is, for the believers, and the purpose is to alert people of faith that they should not start loving wealth and comfort to the extent that their hearts choke when it comes to spending at occasions and on rights enjoined by Allah Ta'ālā. As for the earlier verse (36) that carries the same text, it was addressed to disbelievers and polytheists who prided on the worldly assets of wealth and children and declared these to be the proof of their success in the Hereafter. Thus, any discordance between the addressee and the purpose of address stands eliminated. Maulāna Ashraf 'Alī Thanāvi, in his *khulasah* of Tafsir Bayān ul-Qur'ān, has taken the same approach by first adding 'the believers' in parenthesis while explaining this verse.

Another difference between these two verses pointed to by some commentators is that mentioned in the first verse was the distribution of sustenance between different human beings, that is, Allah Ta'ālā gives more of wealth and property to some, and less to some others - all in His wisdom and in the light of universal considerations. And in this verse, only one person and his different states have been mentioned, that is, this one person has, at times, more with him, then, comes another time and the same person has much less as well. The word: 'لَهُ' (lahu: for him) which appears in this verse after: يَقْدِرُ (yaqdiru: straitens) releases an indication in this direction. This approach too leaves no discordance behind. Rather, the first verse turns out as relating to different individuals and the present verse, to different states of one single person.

The sentence: 'وَمَآ اَنۡفَقۡتُمۡ مِّنۡ شَیۡءٍ فَهُوَ يُخۡلِفُهُ' (And whatever thing you spend, He replaces it. And He is the best of the sustainers.) in verse 39 literally means: 'For anything that you spend, Allah Ta'ālā gives you a return from His unseen treasures - at times, within this world and at times, in the Hereafter and at times, in both.' In things happening around us, we see that water comes down from above, animals and humans use it freely, needs of farms and forests are satiated, and no sooner does that supply of water gets used up, than another supply descends to replenish it. Similar is the case of wells dug for water that, no matter how much water is spent out of these, it stands replenished by nature from other sources of water beneath the bed. Man eats up his food leaving the impression that he has finished it, but Allah Ta'ālā provides him with other food in its absence. Physical exercise burns out calories of food and other workings of nature turn it into energy. In short, whatever man spends out in this world, it is the customary practice of Allah Ta'ālā that He would replace it with something else similar to it. Something happening contrary to this, as an exceptional case, - either to punish one, or for the sake of some other creational consideration - will not be deemed as contrary to this customary Divine practice.

According to a Ḥadīth of Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ﷺ in Ṣaḥīḥ of Muslim, the Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "Everyday when people rise to see another morning, two angels descend from the heavens and pray: اَللّٰهُم اعطِ منفقا خلفا واعط ممسكا تلفا (O Allah, bless the one who spends [out of what You gave him or her] with its return, and let the one who withholds [what

You gave him or her] find it wasted." And according to another Ḥadīth, the Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "Allah Ta'ālā has told me: You spend on people, I shall spend on you."

There is no promise of a return for spending that is not in accordance with the Sharī'ah

Says a Ḥadīth of Sayyidnā Jabir رضي الله عنه that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "Good deed is *sadaqah* (an act of charity in the way of Allah). When someone spends on himself or his children and family, that spending too falls under sadaqah. It brings *thawab* (reward from Allah). And one who spends to protect his integrity and honor, this too is sadaqah. And whoever spends whatever he does in obedience to the command of Allah, He has taken it upon Himself that He will give him its return - except that which is spent in (wasteful, extra to need) building or sinful activity, for there is no promise of a return for it."

After hearing this Ḥadīth from Sayyidnā Jabir رضي الله عنه, his disciple, Ibn al-Munkadir asked him: 'What is the meaning of spending to protect one's honor?' He said, 'There may be a person about whom one apprehends that, should he not give him something, he would go about maligning him in all sorts of ways. In this case, giving to such a person is in order to save one's honor.' (Reported by ad-Darquṭni, Qurṭubī)

With the decrease in the use of something, its production also decreases

The hint embedded in this verse also tells us that as long as the things of use provided by Allah Ta'ālā for consumption of human beings and animals keep being consumed, these keep being replaced by Him constantly. The rule seems to be that the more the consumption of something, the more its production. The multiple uses made of domestic animals like goats, sheep and cows put them high on the list of consumption. They are slaughtered. Their meat is eaten. Then, they are also slaughtered under Islamic legal requirements, such as, the Qurbānī or sacrifice, and in Kaffarat (plural of kaffarah or expiation) and jinayat (faults, offences against religious prohibitions). The more they are consumed, the more increased becomes their frequency of production from Allah Ta'ālā. This is common experience everywhere. The number of these animals, despite being under the knife all the time, remains the highest in the world. The number of dogs and cats is not that high,

although the reproduction of dogs and cats should obviously be much more as they produce four or five puppies and kittens in a single pregnancy. A cow or goat delivers two calves or kids at the most. Cows and goats keep being slaughtered all the time. Dogs and cats are (generally) not touched by anyone. But, as far as common observations goes, it cannot be denied that the number of cows, sheep and goats comparatively exceeds the number of dogs and cats. Since the time restrictions have been placed on the slaughter of cows in India, the production of cows has gone down there in that very ratio. Otherwise, every village and every home would have been full of cows that stayed spared from being slaughtered.

Once the Arabs tapered down their use of camels for riding and transport purposes, the usual increase in the populations of their camels has also gone down. Incidentally, what has been said here also helps remove that atheistic doubt usually dished out with reference to the Islamic injunctions of sacrifice saying that it is likely to affect the economy of Muslims adversely.

Verses 40 - 42

وَيَوْمَ يَحْشُرُهُمْ جَمِيعًا ثُمَّ يَقُولُ لِلْمَلٰٓئِكَةِ اَهٰٓؤُلَآءِ اِيَّاكُمْ كَانُوْا
يَعْبُدُوْنَ ﴿٤٠﴾ قَالُوْا سُبْحٰنَكَ اَنْتَ وَلِيُّنَا مِنْ دُوْنِهِمْ ۚ بَلْ كَانُوْا
يَعْبُدُوْنَ الْجِنَّ ۚ اَكْثَرُهُمْ بِهِمْ مُّؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿٤١﴾ فَالْيَوْمَ لَايَمْلِكُ
بَعْضُكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ نَّفْعًا وَّلَاضَرًّا ۗ وَنَقُوْلُ لِلَّذِيْنَ ظَلَمُوْا ذُوْقُوْا عَذَابَ
النَّارِ الَّتِىْ كُنْتُمْ بِهَا تُكَذِّبُوْنَ ﴿٤٢﴾

And (remember) the Day when He will gather them all together, then will say to the angels," Is it you that these people used to worship?" [40] **They will say, " Pure are You! You are our mentor, not these. Rather, they used to worship the Jinns. Most of these believed in them."** [41] **So, you have no power today to benefit or harm one another, and We will say to the wrongdoers, " Taste the punishment of Fire that you used to belie."** [42]

Verses 43 - 50

وَإِذَا تُتْلَىٰ عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتُنَا بَيِّنَاتٍ قَالُوا مَا هَٰذَا إِلَّا رَجُلٌ يُرِيدُ أَنْ يَصُدَّكُمْ
عَمَّا كَانَ يَعْبُدُ آبَاؤُكُمْ وَقَالُوا مَا هَٰذَا إِلَّا إِفْكٌ مُفْتَرًى وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ
كَفَرُوا لِلْحَقِّ لَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ إِنْ هَٰذَا إِلَّا سِحْرٌ مُبِينٌ ﴿٤٣﴾ وَمَا آتَيْنَاهُمْ
مِنْ كُتُبٍ يَدْرُسُونَهَا وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا إِلَيْهِمْ قَبْلَكَ مِنْ نَذِيرٍ ﴿٤٤﴾ وَكَذَّبَ
الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ وَمَا بَلَغُوا مِعْشَارَ مَا آتَيْنَاهُمْ فَكَذَّبُوا رُسُلِي
فَكَيْفَ كَانَ نَكِيرِ ﴿٤٥﴾ قُلْ إِنَّمَا أَعِظُكُمْ بِوَاحِدَةٍ أَنْ تَقُومُوا لِلَّهِ
مَثْنَىٰ وَفُرَادَىٰ ثُمَّ تَتَفَكَّرُوا مَا بِصَاحِبِكُمْ مِنْ جِنَّةٍ إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا نَذِيرٌ
لَكُمْ بَيْنَ يَدَيْ عَذَابٍ شَدِيدٍ ﴿٤٦﴾ قُلْ مَا سَأَلْتُكُمْ مِنْ أَجْرٍ فَهُوَ لَكُمْ
إِنْ أَجْرِيَ إِلَّا عَلَى اللَّهِ وَهُوَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدٌ ﴿٤٧﴾ قُلْ إِنَّ رَبِّي
يَقْذِفُ بِالْحَقِّ عَلَّامُ الْغُيُوبِ ﴿٤٨﴾ قُلْ جَاءَ الْحَقُّ وَمَا يُبْدِئُ
الْبَاطِلُ وَمَا يُعِيدُ ﴿٤٩﴾ قُلْ إِنْ ضَلَلْتُ فَإِنَّمَا أَضِلُّ عَلَىٰ نَفْسِي وَإِنِ
اهْتَدَيْتُ فَبِمَا يُوحِي إِلَيَّ رَبِّي إِنَّهُ سَمِيعٌ قَرِيبٌ ﴿٥٠﴾

And when Our evident verses are recited to them, they say," He is nothing but a man who wishes to divert you from what your fathers used to worship." And they say," This is nothing but a forged lie." And the disbelievers say about the Truth, when it came to them,"This is nothing but an explicit magic." [43] And We did not give them any books that they might study, nor did We send to them any warner before you. [44] And those before them had rejected (the messengers), while these(infidels of Makkah) have not reached even one tenth of what We gave to those (before them). So, they rejected my Messengers. Then (imagine) how was My censure! [45]

Say," I advise you for one thing only : that you stand up before Allah, in pairs and in singles, then reflect; (you will easily appreciate that) there is no madness in your fellow (the Holy Prophet). He is none but a warner to you in the face of a stern torment. [46] Say, "If I had ever

claimed any reward from you, then it is yours. My reward is with none but Allah. And He is witness over every thing." [47] **Say," My Lord sends forth the Truth. He is the Best-Knower of the Unseen."** [48] **Say, " Truth has come, and falsehood (has vanished so as it) has no power to produce or reproduce (anything)."** [49] **Say, " If I go astray, I shall go astray only to my own detriment. And if I follow the right path, it is because of what my Lord reveals to me. Surely He is All-Hearer, Ever-Near.** [50]

Commentary

The word: مِعْشَار (*mi'shar*) in verse 45: وَمَا بَلَغُوْا مِعْشَارَمَا اٰتَيْنٰهُمْ (while these(infidels of Makkah) have not reached even one tenth of what We gave to those (before them).) has been taken to mean: عُشْر (*'ushr*: a tenth) by some early commentators. Some scholars have interpreted it as: عُشْرُ الْعُشْر ('ushr-ul-'ushr: a hundredth) while others call it: عُشْرُ الْعَشِيْر (*'ushr-ul-'ashir*: a thousandth). Obviously, the later has a higher degree of exaggeration as compared to 'ushr or ten. The sense of the verse is that not even a tenth, rather a thousandth, of the worldly wealth, power, blessings of age and health given to earlier communities was received by the people of Makkah. Therefore, they should take lesson from what happened to past communities and the evil end they faced. These were people who invited upon themselves the wrath of Allah when they rejected prophets and messengers and, consequently, when came the actual punishment, their power, bravery, wealth and fortified fortresses could do nothing for them.

Call to the disbelievers of Makkah

In verse 46: اِنَّمَآ اَعِظُكُمْ بِوَاحِدَةٍ (I advise you for one thing only), in order to negate any excuse for the people of Makkah, they have been shown a shortcut to ascertain truth. For this, they had to do just one thing: Stand for Allah, in pairs and singles. 'Standing for Allah' does not mean standing in the physical sense, something like standing up from the posture of sitting or lying. Instead of that, it means having the resolve to show full care and concern for the assignment in sight. Then, by adding: لِلّٰهِ (lil-lah: For Allah) with the word: قِيَام (*qiyam*: To stand), the purpose is to make it clear that one should start looking for truth with a mind cleansed of previous thoughts and beliefs for the good pleasure of Allah alone, so that previous thoughts and deeds do not obstruct one's way to

an acceptance of the truth. And then, the expression 'in pairs and singles' is not intended to point out a particular number. The sense is that there are two ways of pondering over something: (1) To think it out alone and in private. (2) To consult friends and elders, discuss it with them and then arrive at some conclusion. It is being said here that, 'out of these two methods, you can go by the one you like.'

The conjunction: ثُمَّ (*thumma*: then) in the next sentence in verse 46: ثُمَّ تَتَفَكَّرُوا (*thumma tatafakkaru:* then ponder) refers back to: أَنْ تَقُومُوا (*an taqumu*: That you stand) appearing earlier in the same verse where the purpose of standing has been spelt out - that is, 'cleanse your mind of all previous thoughts, get ready to act for the good pleasure of Allah, think about the call of the prophet of Islam, Sayyidnā Muḥammad al-Muṣṭafa ﷺ and decide for yourself whether or not it is true and it does not matter whether you do this thinking on your own and all alone, or you do it by consulting others and arriving at some conclusion following discussions with them.'

Onwards from here, another line of thinking has been suggested: Here is a solitary person, all by himself, with no power or group to back him and no wealth or property to strengthen him. Here he comes proclaiming an article of faith counter to that of his own people, rather that of the whole world, something having taken firm roots over centuries and something they all agree to. Such a proclamation can come only in two forms: (1) Either the person making the proclamation is totally insane who has no idea of his gain or loss and is ready to invite the wrath of his people and all sorts of hardship for him. (2) Or, what he is saying might as well be true - that he is a rasul or messenger from Allah and fears none in conveying and implementing His command.

Now, think hard with an open mind as to which of the two things is the real thing. If you think in that manner, you would be left with no choice but to become certain that he cannot be insane. The entire city of Makkah and everyone in the large tribe of Quraish is aware of his wisdom and character. He has spent forty years of his life among his people. From childhood to his youth, everything about him has been before them. No one has ever found any word or deed issuing forth from him to be counter to reason, wisdom, sobriety and gentleness. And other than the kalimah of: لَا إِلٰهَ إِلَّا اللّٰهُ : la ilaha il-lal-lah (there is no god but

Allah) to which he invites people, no one can doubt any of his word and deed to be counter to reason and wisdom, even today. Given these conditions, it becomes quite obvious that he cannot be insane. This was established in the next sentence of the verse by saying: مَابِصَاحِبِكُم مِّن جِنَّةٍ (there is no madness in your fellow (the Holy Prophet)). Here, the word: صَاحِبِكُم (*sahibikum*: your fellow) releases a hint in this direction. It is suggesting that should it be the case of a visitor coming in from outside whose antecedents are unknown and who is heard saying something counter to the belief of a whole people, then, it is possible to call him insane. But, this cannot be true in his case. He is one of you, he lives in your city, he belongs to your brotherhood and abides in your company be it day or night. Nothing he does is hidden from you. In fact, even you yourselves have never cast aspersions against him in that manner before this.

And when the absence of the first situation becomes clear, the second situation stands established that has been mentioned in the last sentence of this very verse (46) as: اِنْ هُوَ اِلَّا نَذِيْرٌ لَّكُم بَيْنَ يَدَىْ عَذَابٍ شَدِيْدٍ (He is none but a warner to you in the face of a stern torment). It means that his presence among them signifies nothing but that he has been sent there to save people from the severe punishment of the Day of Judgment by warning them of it in advance.

Verse 48: اِنَّ رَبِّىْ يَقْذِفُ بِالْحَقِّ عَلَّامُ الْغُيُوْبِ (Say," My Lord sends forth the Truth. He is the Best-Knower of the Unseen." - 34:48) Say, "Truth has come, and falsehood (has vanished so as it) has no power to produce or reproduce (anything)". It means that my Lord who is the Knower of the Unseen strikes out the false with a throw of the truth (as a result of which the false is destroyed, as it was said: فَاِذَا هُوَ زَاهِقٌ : 'and there it is all gone'- Al-Anbiya', 21:18). Literally, the word: قَذَفَ (qadhf) means to hit by throwing. Here, the purpose is to highlight the truth as set against the false. Perhaps, there may be a wise consideration behind expressing this phenomenon through the word: يَقْذِف (yaqdhifu: He throws), may be the purpose is to point out to the after effect of the truth prevailing over the false. It appears here in the form of a simile as the throwing of something heavy over something feeble that shatters into pieces. So it happens in the confrontation between truth and falsehood when the later lies shattered. Therefore, it was said next: وَمَا يُبْدِئُ الْبَاطِلُ وَمَا يُعِيْدُ (and falsehood

(has vanished so as it) has no power to produce or reproduce anything) that is, falsehood becomes so incapacitated in the face of truth that it can neither originate anything nor can it bring it back.

Verses 51 - 54

وَلَوْ تَرَىٰ إِذْ فَزِعُوا فَلَا فَوْتَ وَأُخِذُوا مِن مَّكَانٍ قَرِيبٍ ﴿٥١﴾ وَقَالُوا
آمَنَّا بِهِ وَأَنَّىٰ لَهُمُ التَّنَاوُشُ مِن مَّكَانٍ بَعِيدٍ ﴿٥٢﴾ وَقَدْ كَفَرُوا بِهِ
مِن قَبْلُ وَيَقْذِفُونَ بِالْغَيْبِ مِن مَّكَانٍ بَعِيدٍ ﴿٥٣﴾ وَحِيلَ بَيْنَهُمْ
وَبَيْنَ مَا يَشْتَهُونَ كَمَا فُعِلَ بِأَشْيَاعِهِم مِّن قَبْلُ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا فِي
شَكٍّ مُّرِيبٍ ﴿٥٤﴾

And if you could only see when they will be terrified! Then there will be no escape, and they will be seized from a place near at hand. [51] **And they will say, " We believe in Him." And how can they achieve it (the faith) from a place (so) far off,** [52] **while they had rejected it before, and used to make conjectures from a place (so) far off ?** [53] **And a barrier will be placed between them and that which they desire, as it will be done with the people of their kind who were before (them). They were in a perplexing doubt.** [54]

Commentary

According to most commentators, the attending condition described in verse 51: وَأُخِذُوا مِن مَّكَانٍ قَرِيبٍ (and they will be seized from a place near at hand) refers to the Day of Resurrection (al-ḥashr) from the terror of which disbelievers and sinners will not be able to escape even if they try to do so. In our normal experience in this world, when a culprit runs away, he has to be searched for. Something like that will not happen in the present case. In fact, all of them will be seized from where they are located. No one will have the chance to escape. Others have taken this time to be that of the agony of death, that is, when the time of death comes, they will be terrified and, unable to extricate themselves from the hands of the angels, they will be seized where they are with their soul taken out.

The word: تَنَاوُش (tanawush) in verse 52: وَقَالُوٓا اٰمَنَّا بِهٖ وَاَنّٰى لَهُمُ التَّنَاوُشُ مِنْ مَّكَانٍ بَعِيْدٍ (And they will say, " We believe in Him." And how can they achieve it (the faith) from a place (so) far off?) means to pick up something by stretching one's hand. Then, it is obvious that one can pick up only what is near at hand. If it is very far, it will be out of reach. The subject of the verse is that disbelievers and deniers, once they see reality as it is on the Day of Judgement, will say, "We have now come to believe in the Qur'ān, or the messenger of Allah to whom it was revealed." But, they would not know that the time and place for embracing 'Iman (faith) has receded far away from them for the reason that 'Iman is a thing of the life of the mortal world and that alone is what is accepted. The 'Ākhirah (the Hereafter) is not the venue of deeds, the place to act right (*darul-'amāl*). Nothing done there can be taken into account. Therefore, how is it possible that they pick up the great wealth of 'Iman just by stretching their hand for it.

The word: قَذْف (*qadhf*) in verse 53: وَقَدْ كَفَرُوْا بِهٖ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَيَقْذِفُوْنَ بِالْغَيْبِ مِنْ مَّكَانٍ بَعِيْدٍ (while they had rejected it before, and used to make conjectures from a place (so) far off) means to hit something by throwing. In the Arab idiom, anyone talking out of his hat having no proof for it is referred to by the expressions: رجم بالغيب (*rajm bil-ghayb*) and: قذف بالغيب (*qadhf bil-ghayb*), that is, this person shoots arrows in the dark which has no aim or target. At this place, the expression: مِنْ مَّكَانٍ بَعِيْدٍ (from a place far away) means 'what they say is far from their hearts, that is, they do not believe in it by heart.'

In the last verse (54), it was said: وَحِيْلَ بَيْنَهُمْ وَبَيْنَ مَا يَشْتَهُوْنَ (And a barrier will be placed between them and that which they desire,) that is, they were not allowed to have it. This description could be true about the Day of Judgment in the sense that these people will be seeking salvation and Paradise but would fail to have it. Then, it could also apply to the time of death in the world, that is, they wished to have worldly wealth that was made to stay away from them by the barrier of death.

The word: اَشْيَاع (*ashya'*) in: كَمَا فُعِلَ بِاَشْيَاعِهِمْ (as it will be done with the people of their kind who were before (them). They were in a perplexing doubt.) is the plural form of: شِيْعَه (*shi'ah*). One who is a follower of someone and thinks alike is called a shi'ah or partisan of that person. The sense is that the punishment of having been deprived of what they

wished to have was no other but a punishment that had already been given to people like them who indulged in doings their disbelief prompted them to do. The reason was that they were deep in doubt, that is, they did not believe in the prophethood of Sayyidnā Muḥammad al-Muṣṭafa ﷺ nor did they have the certitude of and faith in the Qur'ān being the Divine word. And Allah is Pure and High and He knows the best.

Alḥamdulillāh
The Commentary on
Sūrah Saba'
Ends here

Sūrah Faṭir

(Creator/Originator)

Sūrah Faṭir was revealed at Makkah and it has 45 verses and 5 sections

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 3

اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ فَاطِرِ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ جَاعِلِ الْمَلٰٓئِكَةِ رُسُلًا اُولِيْٓ
اَجْنِحَةٍ مَّثْنٰى وَثُلٰثَ وَرُبٰعَ ؕ يَزِيْدُ فِى الْخَلْقِ مَا يَشَآءُ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ عَلٰى
كُلِّ شَىْءٍ قَدِيْرٌ ﴿١﴾ مَا يَفْتَحِ اللّٰهُ لِلنَّاسِ مِنْ رَّحْمَةٍ فَلَا مُمْسِكَ لَهَا ۚ
وَمَا يُمْسِكْ ۙ فَلَا مُرْسِلَ لَهٗ مِنْۢ بَعْدِهٖ ؕ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيْزُ الْحَكِيْمُ ﴿٢﴾ يٰٓاَيُّهَا
النَّاسُ اذْكُرُوْا نِعْمَتَ اللّٰهِ عَلَيْكُمْ ؕ هَلْ مِنْ خَالِقٍ غَيْرُ اللّٰهِ يَرْزُقُكُمْ
مِّنَ السَّمَآءِ وَالْاَرْضِ ؕ لَآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا هُوَ ۖ فَاَنّٰى تُؤْفَكُوْنَ ﴿٣﴾

All praise belongs to Allah, the Originator of the heavens and the earth, who makes the angels messengers having wings, in twos, threes and fours. He adds to the creation what He wills. Indeed, Allah is powerful to do every thing. [1] Whatever blessing Allah opens for the people, there is none to hold it back, and whatever He holds back, there is none to release it thereafter. And He is the Mighty, the Wise. [2] O mankind, remember Allah's blessing upon you. Is there any creator other than Allah who gives you provision from the sky and the earth? There is no god, but He. So, to where are you being turned around (by your desires)? [3]

Commentary

As for the statement: جَاعِلِ الْمَلٰٓئِكَةِ رُسُلًا (who makes the angels messengers), it means that angels were assigned to convey the messages and injunctions of Allah Ta'ālā. From this, it is obvious that they are sent to the noble prophets علیهم السلام as the message-bearers or envoys of Allah. They convey the revelations and the injunctions of Allah to them. And it is also possible that the word: رسول (Rasūl) used here may be denoting the sense of link at this place, that is, they become a link between Allah Ta'ālā and His universal creation out of which the noble prophets علیهم السلام are the superior-most. Thus, they also become an intermediary link for the transmittal of revelation from Allah Ta'ālā to them. Then, these very angels happen to be the means of bringing the mercy of Allah or His punishment to the universal creation.

The next statement: اُولِيْٓ اَجْنِحَةٍ مَّثْنٰى وَثُلٰثَ وَرُبٰعَ (having wings, in twos and threes and fours) means that Allah Ta'ālā has given to the angels feathered wings they can fly with. The wise consideration behind it is obvious as they traverse the distance between the heavens and the earth repeatedly, and this can become possible only when they are endowed with the necessary speed to so traverse, something that can come about in the mode of flying only.

And the words: مَثْنٰى وَ ثُلٰثَ وَرُبٰعَ (in twos and threes and fours) are, evidently enough, numerical adjectives referring to: اَجْنِحَة (wings) in the sense that the number of the feathers angels have varies from angel to angel . Some have only two wings. Others have three. Still others have four. Even the numbers mentioned here are not comprehensive, rather they are mentioned here just as an example, because it is proved by a Ḥadīth in Ṣaḥīḥ of Muslim that Sayyidnā Jibra'īl علیه السلام, has six hundred feathers. (Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr)

Moreover, it is also possible that these three words are numerical adjectives referring to the word: رُسُلًا (rusulan: bearers of the message) in the sense that these angels who deliver messages from Allah Ta'ālā to this world sometimes come in twos and at others in threes or fours. Once again, in this situation too, the number of four is not intended for restriction. It is there just for example because the coming of angels in a much larger number stands proved from the Qur'ān itself. (Abū Ḥayyan in al-Baḥr ul-Muḥīṭ)

The next sentence: يَزِيدُ فِي الْخَلْقِ مَا يَشَاءُ (He adds to the creation what He wills) means that Allah Ta'ālā has the power to increase whatever He wills and as much as He wills in the creation of everything He has originated. This obviously is related to: أَجْنِحَة (ajnihah: wings) in that the feathers and wings of the angels are not something simply restricted to two or four in numbers, for they could be many more than these if Allah Ta'ālā so wills. Most commentators say exactly this. And Tafsīr authorities Zuhri, Qatadah and others have said that this increase in creation is to be taken in its general sense which includes increase in the feathers and wings of angels as well as the increase of particular attributes in the creation of different human beings which, then, includes the beauty of form, the beauty of character, the beauty of voice and many more increased assets like these. Abū Ḥayyan has, in al-Baḥr ul-Muḥīṭ, followed this track of explanation and said that things like good manners, beauty of figure and face, perfection of reason and intellect, politeness in discourse and similar others are all included therein. This second Tafsīr proves that the beauty or perfection of anything one has is invariably a gift and blessing from Allah Ta'ālā for which one should be grateful to Him.

The word: رَحْمَة (*raḥmah*: mercy) appearing in verse 2: مَا يَفْتَحِ اللّٰهُ لِلنَّاسِ مِنْ رَّحْمَةٍ فَلَا مُمْسِكَ لَهَا (Whatever blessing Allah opens for the people, there is none to hold it back,) is general at this place. It includes blessings of one's religion in this world along with those of the Hereafter, such as, faith, knowledge, rightly guided conduct as well as the mission of a prophet and the station of a Waliyy or man of Allah. And it also includes material blessings in the present world, such as, provisions, means, comfort, health, wealth, property, recognition and things like that. The meaning of the verse is quite obvious. It is being said here that the person for whom Allah Ta'ālā intends to open the doors of His mercy, there is no one who can stop it.

Similarly, the second sentence: وَمَا يُمْسِكْ (wa ma yumsik: there is none to hold it back) is general, meaning: what Allah Ta'ālā holds back cannot be released by anyone. This includes hardships and sorrows of the world. For example, when Allah intends to shield some servant of His from these, then, there is no one who can dare harass or harm him. And included here is the matter of mercy as well in the sense that, should Allah Ta'ālā

decide to deprive a person of His mercy due to some wise consideration of His, then, there is no one who can dare pass it on to him. (Abū Ḥayyan)

Related to this very subject of the verse, there is a Ḥadīth that reports that Sayyidnā Mu'awiyah ﷺ wrote to Sayyidnā Mughirah Ibn Shu'abah ﷺ, his governor at Kufah, asking him to send back to him in writing some Ḥadīth he had personally heard from the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Sayyidnā Mughirah ﷺ called Rawwad, his chief scribe, in his office and dictated his report as: 'I heard from the Holy Prophet ﷺ soon after he finished his salah his recitation of the words: اَللّٰهُمَّ لَا مَانِعَ لِمَا اَعْطَيْتَ وَلَا مُعْطِيَ لِمَا مَنَعْتَ وَلَا يَنْفَعُ ذَا الْجَدِّ مِنْكَ الْجَدُّ (O Allah, for that which You give, there is no one to stop, and for that which you hold back, there is no one to give it out, and no effort[1] by any maker of effort works against Your will'). (Ibn Kathīr from the Musnad of Aḥmad)

And according to a narration of Sayyidnā Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī ﷺ in Ṣaḥīḥ of Muslim, he said these words at the time he raised his head from the (bending) position of *ruku'* before another sentence: اَحَقُّ مَا قَالَ الْعَبْدُ وَكُلُّنَا لَكَ (that is, these words, out of all that a servant of Allah can say, are the most true, incumbent and superior).

Trust in Allah delivers from all hardships

The lesson taught by the cited verse (2) to all human beings is that one should not hope any benefit or fear any harm from anyone other than Allah, instead, one should keep his or her sight trained towards Allah alone. This is the master prescription for a better life in this world as well as in the life to come. This simple antidote delivers one from thousands of anxieties and sorrows. (Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī)

Sayyidnā 'Amir Ibn 'Abd Qays ﷺ said: Once I get to recite four verses of the noble Qur'ān in the morning, I stop worrying about what would happen in the morning and what would happen in the evening. These verses are as follows. The first one is this very verse under study: مَا يَفْتَحِ اللّٰهُ لِلنَّاسِ مِنْ رَّحْمَةٍ فَلَا مُمْسِكَ لَهَا وَمَا يُمْسِكْ فَلَا مُرْسِلَ لَهُ مِنْ بَعْدِهٖ (Whatever blessing Allah opens for the people, there is none to hold it back, and whatever He holds back, there is none to release it thereafter - 35:2). The second verse

[1] This translation is based on one way of reading this prayer, that is, jidd (with kasrah on the letter jim, but if it is read as jadd, the the correct translation would be: 'no high status of a person may benefit him against Your decree.

(Muḥammad Taqi Usmani)

having the same sense appears in Sūrah al-An'am, 6:17: اِنْ يَّمْسَسْكَ اللّٰهُ بِضُرٍّ فَلَا كَاشِفَ لَهٗٓ اِلَّا هُوَ وَاِنْ يُّرِدْكَ بِخَيْرٍ فَلَا رَآدَّ لِفَضْلِهٖ (And if Allah causes you some harm, no one is there to remove it except He Himself; and if He causes you some good, then He is powerful over everything - 6:17). The third verse is from Sūrah At-Ṭalaq, 65:7: سَيَجْعَلُ اللّٰهُ بَعْدَ عُسْرٍ يُّسْرًا (Allah will soon bring ease after a difficulty). The fourth verse is from Sūrah Hūd, 11:6: وَمَا مِنْ دَآبَّةٍ فِي الْاَرْضِ اِلَّا عَلَى اللّٰهِ رِزْقُهَا (And there is no creature on earth whose sustenance is not on Allah - 11:6). (Narrated by Ibn al-Mundhir, as in Ruḥ ul-Ma'ani)

And when Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ﷺ saw rain falling, he used to say: مُطِرْنَا بنوء الْفَتْح (The rain has come upon us through the rise of fath: (the opening) and would, then, recite the verse: مَا يَفْتَحِ اللّٰهُ لِلنَّاسِ مِنْ رَّحْمَةٍ (Whatever blessing Allah opens for the people, there is none to hold it back,- 34:2). This term of 'rise of fath' used by him was in rebuttal of the false notion prevailing among Arabs of those days who used to attribute the coming of rains to the rise of particular stars and said that the rains had come upon them through the rise of such and such star. Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ﷺ countered it by saying that (the mercy of) rains came to him through (the statement in) the verse of fath or opening. By this, he meant this very verse quoted above. He used to recite it particularly on such occasions. (Reported by Imām Mālik in al-Mu'waṭṭa)

Verses 4 - 8

وَاِنْ يُّكَذِّبُوْكَ فَقَدْ كُذِّبَتْ رُسُلٌ مِّنْ قَبْلِكَ ؕ وَاِلَى اللّٰهِ تُرْجَعُ الْاُمُوْرُ
﴿٤﴾ يٰٓاَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اِنَّ وَعْدَ اللّٰهِ حَقٌّ فَلَا تَغُرَّنَّكُمُ الْحَيٰوةُ الدُّنْيَا ۥ وَلَا
يَغُرَّنَّكُمْ بِاللّٰهِ الْغَرُوْرُ ﴿٥﴾ اِنَّ الشَّيْطٰنَ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ فَاتَّخِذُوْهُ عَدُوًّا ؕ
اِنَّمَا يَدْعُوْا حِزْبَهٗ لِيَكُوْنُوْا مِنْ اَصْحٰبِ السَّعِيْرِ ﴿٦﴾ اَلَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا
لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ شَدِيْدٌ ۬ؕ وَالَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ لَهُمْ مَّغْفِرَةٌ
وَّاَجْرٌ كَبِيْرٌ ﴿٧﴾ اَفَمَنْ زُيِّنَ لَهٗ سُوْٓءُ عَمَلِهٖ فَرَاٰهُ حَسَنًا ؕ فَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ
يُضِلُّ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ وَيَهْدِيْ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ ۖ فَلَا تَذْهَبْ نَفْسُكَ عَلَيْهِمْ
حَسَرٰتٍ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ عَلِيْمٌ ۢ بِمَا يَصْنَعُوْنَ ﴿٨﴾

And if they reject you,(it is not something new, because) many messengers have been rejected before you. And to Allah all matters are to be returned. [4] **O mankind, Allah's promise is definitely true, therefore, the worldly life must not deceive you, nor should you be deceived about Allah by the big deceiver (Satan).** [5] **Surely Satan is an enemy for you. So, take him as an enemy. He invites his group only to cause them to be among the people of blazing fire.** [6] **Those who disbelieve will have a severe punishment; and those who believe and do righteous deeds will have forgiveness and a great reward.** [7] **Is it, then, that the one whose evil deed has been made attractive to him so much that he deems it to be good (will be held equal to him who differentiates between right and wrong) ? The fact, therefore, is that Allah lets go astray whomsoever He wills , and leads to the right path whomsoever He wills. So, let not your soul collapse in grief for them. Surely Allah fully knows what they are doing.** [8]

Commentary

The word: غَرور (gharur) is an emphatic form of an adjective that means one who is very deceiving (hence, rendered here as 'big deceiver'). It refers to the Shaitan (Satan) whose sole job is to deceive people and throw them into disbelief and sin. And the expression: لَا يَغُرَّنَّكُمْ بِاللّٰهِ الْغَرُوْرُ (5) means 'nor should you be deceived about Allah'. To explain this deception, it can be said that the Shaitan may not, by showing your evil deeds as good, cause you to become so involved with these that you reach the stage when you go on committing a sin and, at the same time, keep thinking that you are of those accepted in the sight of Allah, and that you will not have to undergo any punishment.' (Qurṭubi)

Imām al-Baghawi has reported on the authority of Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ that the verse: فَإِنَّ اللّٰهَ يُضِلُّ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ وَيَهْدِىْ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ (The fact, therefore, is that Allah lets go astray whomsoever He wills , and leads to the right path whomsoever He wills.- 8) was revealed at a time when the Holy Prophet ﷺ had made the prayer: 'O Allah, bless Islam with prestige and power, through 'Umar Ibn al-Khaṭṭzb, or Abū Jahl.' Out of the two, Allah Ta'ālā showed the right path to Sayyidnā 'Umar and made him the cause of Islam's prestige and power, while Abū Jahl remained as astray as he was. (Maẓhari)

Verses 9 - 14

وَاللّٰهُ الَّذِیْٓ اَرْسَلَ الرِّیٰحَ فَتُثِیْرُ سَحَابًا فَسُقْنٰهُ اِلٰی بَلَدٍ مَّیِّتٍ فَاَحْیَیْنَا
بِهِ الْاَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا ؕ كَذٰلِكَ النُّشُوْرُ ﴿٩﴾ مَنْ كَانَ یُرِیْدُ الْعِزَّةَ
فَلِلّٰهِ الْعِزَّةُ جَمِیْعًا ؕ اِلَیْهِ یَصْعَدُ الْكَلِمُ الطَّیِّبُ وَالْعَمَلُ الصَّالِحُ
یَرْفَعُهٗ ؕ وَالَّذِیْنَ یَمْكُرُوْنَ السَّیِّاٰتِ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ شَدِیْدٌ ؕ وَمَكْرُ
اُولٰٓئِكَ هُوَ یَبُوْرُ ﴿١٠﴾ وَاللّٰهُ خَلَقَكُمْ مِّنْ تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ نُّطْفَةٍ ثُمَّ
جَعَلَكُمْ اَزْوَاجًا ؕ وَمَا تَحْمِلُ مِنْ اُنْثٰی وَلَا تَضَعُ اِلَّا بِعِلْمِهٖ ؕ وَمَا
یُعَمَّرُ مِنْ مُّعَمَّرٍ وَّلَا یُنْقَصُ مِنْ عُمُرِهٖۤ اِلَّا فِیْ كِتٰبٍ ؕ اِنَّ ذٰلِكَ عَلَی
اللّٰهِ یَسِیْرٌ ﴿١١﴾ وَمَا یَسْتَوِی الْبَحْرٰنِ ۖۗ هٰذَا عَذْبٌ فُرَاتٌ سَآئِغٌ
شَرَابُهٗ وَهٰذَا مِلْحٌ اُجَاجٌ ؕ وَمِنْ كُلٍّ تَاْكُلُوْنَ لَحْمًا طَرِیًّا
وَّتَسْتَخْرِجُوْنَ حِلْیَةً تَلْبَسُوْنَهَا ۚ وَتَرَی الْفُلْكَ فِیْهِ مَوَاخِرَ لِتَبْتَغُوْا
مِنْ فَضْلِهٖ وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُوْنَ ﴿١٢﴾ یُوْلِجُ الَّیْلَ فِی النَّهَارِ وَیُوْلِجُ
النَّهَارَ فِی الَّیْلِ ۙ وَسَخَّرَ الشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ ۖؗ كُلٌّ یَّجْرِیْ لِاَجَلٍ
مُّسَمًّی ؕ ذٰلِكُمُ اللّٰهُ رَبُّكُمْ لَهُ الْمُلْكُ ؕ وَالَّذِیْنَ تَدْعُوْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِهٖ مَا
یَمْلِكُوْنَ مِنْ قِطْمِیْرٍ ﴿١٣﴾ اِنْ تَدْعُوْهُمْ لَا یَسْمَعُوْا دُعَآءَكُمْ ۚ وَلَوْ
سَمِعُوْا مَا اسْتَجَابُوْا لَكُمْ ؕ وَیَوْمَ الْقِیٰمَةِ یَكْفُرُوْنَ بِشِرْكِكُمْ وَلَا
یُنَبِّئُكَ مِثْلُ خَبِیْرٍ ﴿١٤﴾

And Allah is the One who sends the winds, then they raise up the clouds, then We drive them to a dead land and revive the land through them after its death. In similar way shall be the resurrection. [9] Whoever desires honor, then all honor lies with Allah alone. Towards Him ascends the pure word, and the righteous deed uplifts it. As for those who plot evils, for them there is a severe punishment, and their plot itself will perish. [10] And Allah has created you from dust, then

from a drop of semen, then He made you couples. And no female conceives nor gives birth without His knowledge. And no aged person is made to advance in age, nor a part is curtailed from his age, but all this is (recorded) in a book. Surely all this is easy for Allah. [11] And two seas are not alike; this one is sweet, saturating, pleasant to drink, and that one is saltish, bitter. And from each, you eat fresh meat, and derive ornaments that you wear. And you see the boats therein cleaving through water, so that you may search for His grace, and that you may be grateful. [12] He makes the night enter into the day and makes the day enter into the night, and He has subjugated the sun and the moon; each one of them is running towards an appointed time. That is Allah, your Lord. To Him belongs the kingdom. And those whom you invoke beside Him do not own even the membrane on a date-stone. [13] If you call them, they do not hear your call, and even if they were to hear, they would not respond to you. And on the Day of Judgment they will deny your having held them as Allah's partners. and none can inform you like Him who is Aware. [14]

Commentary

In verse 10, it was said: 'إِلَيْهِ يَصْعَدُ الْكَلِمُ الطَّيِّبُ وَالْعَمَلُ الصَّالِحُ يَرْفَعُهُ' (Towards Him ascends the pure word, and the righteous deed uplifts it). Immediately earlier to this, it was declared that the person seeking honor and power should understand that these matters are not controlled by anyone other than Allah. As for those who have taken certain things as objects of worship or have taken some people as friends in the hope of being honored by them, they cannot give honor to anyone. Given in the present verse, there is a method of acquiring the gifts of grace and honor from Allah Ta'ālā. It has two parts: (1) Good word (that is, the kalimah of tauhid: la ilaha il-lal-lah) and the knowledge of the being and attributes of Allah. (2) Good deed, that is, to believe by heart and then act in accordance with its dictates under the Sharī'ah. Shah 'Abdul Qadir رحمه الله تعالى has said in Mudih-ul-Qur'ān that this prescription of becoming a recipient of honor is perfectly true and tested, however, the condition is that one remains constant in remembering Allah and doing good deeds. When this constancy reaches an appointed limit, Allah Ta'ālā blesses the doer of these with an everlasting and unparalleled honor both in this world and in the world to come.

These two parts have been expressed in the cited verse by saying that good word ascends towards Allah and reaches Him while good deed uplifts it and makes it reach Him. In the grammatical arrangement of: اَلْعَمَلُ الصَّالِحُ يَرْفَعُهٗ (the good deed uplifts it) there are certain probabilities. The meanings of the sentence change in terms of each such probability. Authorities in Tafsīr have explained it in line with the respective probabilities that they have deemed to be appropriate by them. According to the first probability, the subjective pronoun in: يَرْفَعُهٗ (uplifts) should be taken as reverting to: ... (the good deed) and the objective pronoun (it) to: ... (good word) meaning: 'good words ascend to Allah, but the thing through which they are made to ascend are good deeds (as in the khulasa-e-Tafsīr of Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanavi). The majority of Tafsīr authorities - Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās, Ibn Jubayr, Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, Mujahid, Dahhak, Shahr Ibn Hawshab and others - have opted for this very approach. And the sense of ascending to and being helped to ascend is being accepted in the sight of Allah, therefore, the gist of the sentence would be that good word, be it the kalimah of tauhid or others words of the remembrance and glorification of Allah, nothing of it gets to be acceptable with Allah without good deed. Here, the confirmation by heart is an integral part of good deed the most important part of which is the belief by heart in His Oneness. This belief by heart is a necessary condition for the acceptance of deeds in the absolute sense. Without it, neither the Kalīmah: لَآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا اللهُ (*la ilaha il-lal-lah*) nor any other Dhikr of Allah is acceptable.

Then, there are the other parts of good deed, such as, prayers and fasting and abstinence from forbidden and reprehensible things. Though, the acceptability of the 'good word' ,that is, the kalimah of tauhid does not depend on such good deeds, yet these deeds too are conditions to a perfect acceptability of the 'good words'. If a person simply does not have faith, and its confirmation, in his heart, then, no matter how many times he repeats the words of the cardinal statement of one's Islam (Kalīmah Tauḥīd: *la ilaha il-lal-lah*) and remains engaged with dhikr and Tasbiḥ of Allah, he will not deserve the least of acceptability in the sight of Allah. In contrast, there is the case of the other person who does have faith and its confirmation, but fails to do other good deeds or falls short in them, then, his saying of the kalimah of tauhid and the doing of the dhikr of

Allah will, though, not go to waste totally, however, its benefit will be restricted to delivering him from the everlasting punishment. The consequence will be that he will go through a certain punishment for some time that will be in proportion to his abandonment of duty and the shortcoming.

In a Ḥadīth, the Holy Prophet ﷺ has said, 'Allah Ta'ālā does not accept any word without deed, and any word and deed without the intention, and any word, deed and intention without compatibility with sunnah (as said and done by him).' (Qurṭubī)

This tells us that correspondence with sunnah is the condition of perfect acceptability. Even if the word, the deed and the intention, all these, are also correct but the mode and method of conduct is not in accordance with sunnah, then, one cannot become a recipient of perfect acceptability with Allah.

Some commentators suggest another syntactical arrangement in respect of this sentence. According to them, the subjective pronoun in: يَرْفَعُهُ (uplifts) reverts to: ضمیر فاعل (good word) and the objective pronoun (i.e.'it') to: کلم طیّب (good deed). Thus, the meaning of the sentence become totally different from that of the earlier, that is, 'good word' which is the dhikr of Allah, makes 'good deed' ascend and makes it rise higher up, that is, makes it worthy of being accepted. The outcome would then be that a person who does good deeds, and along with it, also does his dhikr of Allah abundantly, then, this dhikr of Allah embellishes his deed and makes it acceptable.

The sense of the verse: وَمَا يُعَمَّرُ مِنْ مُّعَمَّرٍ وَّلَا يُنْقَصُ مِنْ عُمُرِهٖٓ اِلَّا فِيْ كِتٰبٍ (And no aged person is made to advance in age, nor a part is curtailed from his age, but all this is (recorded) in a book - 35:11), according to the majority of the commentators is that if Allah Ta'ālā blesses a person with a long age, it is a fact already on record in the Preserved Tablet (*al-lawḥ al-maḥfuẓ*). Similarly, when the age of a certain person is kept at a lower mark in terms of the number of years, that too already stands recorded in *al-lawḥ al-maḥfuẓ*. The outcome of it all is that the text, at this place, is not referring to one individual person's age being long or short, instead, the statement relates to humankind as a whole, in the sense that some individuals from it are given long ages and others, a comparatively

shorter ones. The explanation has been reported by Ibn Kathir from Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ. Abū Bakr al-Jaṣṣāṣ reports the same saying from Ḥasan al-Baṣrī and Daḥḥak. Therefore, in general books of Tafsir, such as, Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir, Rāḥ ul-Ma'ānī and others, this very explanation has been declared as the view of the majority of commentators. However, some early commentators have said: Should the length of age concerns one single person, then, decrease in age would mean that the age of every person as already written by Allah Ta'ālā is certain, and every day that passes decreases one day from this pre-fixed age. If two days pass, two days decrease. In the same way, every day, in fact, every single breath keeps decreasing one's age. This Tafsir or explanation has been reported from Sha'bi, Ibn Jubayr, Abū Mālik, Ibn 'Atiyyah and Suddiyy. (Rūḥ ul-Ma'ānī)

This subject has been succinctly expressed in an Arabic couplet as:

حَيَاتُکَ اَنفَاسٌ تُعَدُّ فَکُلَّمَا......☆...... مَضٰی نَفَسٌ مِّنهَا انتَقَصَت بِهٖ جُزءٌ

Your life is (the name of) counted breaths. So, whenever passes away a breath from it, a part of it decreases.

In his explanation of this verse, Imām an-Nasa'ī has reported from Sayyidnā Anas Ibn Mālik ﷺ that he heard the Holy Prophet ﷺ saying, "مَنْ سَرَّهٗ اَنْ يُّبْسَطَ لَهٗ فِیْ رِزْقِهٖ وَيُنْسَأَ فِیْ اَثَرِهٖ فَلْيَصِلْ رَحِمَهٗ" This Ḥadith has also been reported by al-Bukhari, Muslim and Abū Dāwūd on the authority of a narration from Yūnus Ibn Yazid Ayli. The Ḥadith means: 'He who wishes that his sustenance and age is increased should treat his close relatives well (*Ṣilatu-r-raḥim*).' This obviously suggests that the these deeds increase one's age. But, another Ḥadith given below has itself clarified its sense:

Ibn Abī Ḥatim reports from Sayyidnā Abū-d-Darda' ﷺ. He says, 'when we mentioned this (subject) before the Holy Prophet ﷺ, he said, "(Age as such is already fixed and determined by Allah), when the fixed term is over, no one is given the least respite. In fact, increase in age means (in the Ḥadith cited above) that Allah Ta'ālā blesses one with good children who keep praying for him. This person is not there anymore, but he keeps receiving their prayers in his grave (that is, he keeps on receiving the benefits one would have received if one were alive. Thus, in a way, his age has increased"). (Both narrations appearing above have been

reported by Ibn Kathīr). In short, Aḥadīth that say that some deeds cause age to increase mean increase in the barakah or bliss of age.

In the next verse: وَمِنْ كُلٍّ تَأْكُلُوْنَ لَحْمًا طَرِيًّا وَّتَسْتَخْرِجُوْنَ حِلْيَةً تَلْبَسُوْنَهَا (And from each, you eat fresh meat, and derive ornaments that you wear - 35:12), it is being said that one gets fresh meat, that is, fish to eat from both waters, sweet or brackish. In this verse, by alluding to fish as meat, the hint released is that fish is meat, already halal by itself. One does not have to slaughter it. This is contrary to the case of the animals found on land. Unless one slaughters them with the name of Allah, they do not become halal. Fish does not have this condition. It is meat, ready to eat. And the word: حِلْيَة (*ḥilyah*) means ornament and refers to pearls. The verse tells us that the way pearls are found in brackish waters, they are also found in sweet waters, something contrary to the general belief, since it is well known that pearls are harvested from the brackish water of the seas. However, the reality is what is evident from the words of the Qur'ān that they form in both - yes, much less in sweet waters and far more in the brackish waters of the sea. That they are found in seas excessively contributed to the popular belief that pearls come only from brackish waters.

By using the masculine form in the last word: تَلْبَسُوْنَهَا (*talbasunaha*: that you wear), a hint is being released that the use of pearls is permissible for men as well - contrary to gold and silver, the use of which as an ornament is not permissible for men. (Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī)

In the last verse: إِنْ تَدْعُوْهُمْ لَايَسْمَعُوْا دُعَآءَ كُمْ ۚ وَلَوْ سَمِعُوْا مَا اسْتَجَابُوْا لَكُمْ (If you call them, they do not hear your call, and even if they were to hear, they would not respond to you. - 35:14). To explain, it can be said that if you call those idols or some prophets or angels you take as god and worship them asking them to help you in distress, they will, first of all, be unable to listen to you because idols do not have the ability to listen. Though, prophets and angels have this ability, yet they are not present everywhere nor do they hear that which is said by everybody. Further on, it was said that, should they, as a matter of supposition, be able to listen, as in the case of angels and prophets, still, they would not fulfill your request, because they themselves have no control over it, and cannot intercede with Allah on behalf of anyone without His permission.

The issue of the ability of the dead to hear (سماع الموتى: sama'-ul-mawtā) has appeared earlier. The present verse neither confirms nor rejects it. Arguments and proofs relating to this issue are different. They have already been mentioned in details under the commentary on Sūrah Ar-Rūm [30] (Ma'ariful-Qur'ān, Volume VI).

Verses 15 - 26

يٰٓاَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اَنْتُمُ الْفُقَرَآءُ اِلَى اللّٰهِ ۚ وَاللّٰهُ هُوَ الْغَنِيُّ الْحَمِيْدُ ﴿١٥﴾ اِنْ
يَّشَاْ يُذْهِبْكُمْ وَيَاْتِ بِخَلْقٍ جَدِيْدٍ ﴿١٦﴾ وَمَا ذٰلِكَ عَلَى اللّٰهِ بِعَزِيْزٍ
﴿١٧﴾ وَلَا تَزِرُ وَازِرَةٌ وِّزْرَ اُخْرٰى ۗ وَاِنْ تَدْعُ مُثْقَلَةٌ اِلٰى حِمْلِهَا
لَا يُحْمَلْ مِنْهُ شَيْءٌ وَّلَوْ كَانَ ذَا قُرْبٰى ۗ اِنَّمَا تُنْذِرُ الَّذِيْنَ يَخْشَوْنَ
رَبَّهُمْ بِالْغَيْبِ وَاَقَامُوا الصَّلٰوةَ ۗ وَمَنْ تَزَكّٰى فَاِنَّمَا يَتَزَكّٰى لِنَفْسِهٖ ۗ
وَاِلَى اللّٰهِ الْمَصِيْرُ ﴿١٨﴾ وَمَا يَسْتَوِى الْاَعْمٰى وَالْبَصِيْرُ ﴿١٩﴾ وَلَا
الظُّلُمٰتُ وَلَا النُّوْرُ ﴿٢٠﴾ وَلَا الظِّلُّ وَلَا الْحَرُوْرُ ﴿٢١﴾ وَمَا يَسْتَوِى
الْاَحْيَآءُ وَلَا الْاَمْوَاتُ ۗ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ يُسْمِعُ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ ۚ وَمَآ اَنْتَ بِمُسْمِعٍ
مَّنْ فِى الْقُبُوْرِ ﴿٢٢﴾ اِنْ اَنْتَ اِلَّا نَذِيْرٌ ﴿٢٣﴾ اِنَّآ اَرْسَلْنٰكَ بِالْحَقِّ
بَشِيْرًا وَّنَذِيْرًا ۗ وَاِنْ مِّنْ اُمَّةٍ اِلَّا خَلَا فِيْهَا نَذِيْرٌ ﴿٢٤﴾ وَاِنْ يُّكَذِّبُوْكَ
فَقَدْ كَذَّبَ الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ ۚ جَآءَتْهُمْ رُسُلُهُمْ بِالْبَيِّنٰتِ وَبِالزُّبُرِ
وَبِالْكِتٰبِ الْمُنِيْرِ ﴿٢٥﴾ ثُمَّ اَخَذْتُ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا فَكَيْفَ كَانَ نَكِيْرِ
﴿٢٦﴾ ع

O men, you are the ones who need Allah, and Allah is the Need-Free, the Ever-Praised. [15] If He so wills, He can do away with you and bring a new creation. [16] And for Allah, that is not something difficult. [17] And no bearer will bear the burden of any other person. And if a person carrying a heavy load calls (someone) to (share) his load, nothing from it shall be carried (by the latter), even though he be a near of kin. You can

warn only those who fear their Lord unseen and establish salah. And whoever gets purified gets purified for his own benefit. And to Allah is the final return. [18] **And the blind and the sighted are not equal,** [19] **nor darkness and light,** [20] **nor shade and heat of the sun.** [21] **And the living and the dead are not alike. Allah makes hear whomsoever He wills. And you cannot make hear those who are in the graves.** [22] **You are but a warner.** [23] **Surely We have sent you with truth as a bearer of good news and as a warner, and there was no community without a warner having passed among them.** [24] **And if they reject you, (it is not something new, because) those before them have (also) rejected (messengers). Their messengers came to them with clear proofs and with scriptures and with the enlightening book.** [25] **Then I seized those who disbelieved. So, how was My censure !** [26]

Commentary

Verse 18: وَلَا تَزِرُ وَازِرَةٌ وِّزْرَ اُخْرٰى (And no bearer will bear the burden of any other person) means that, on the Day of Judgment, no one will be able to bear the burden of another person's sins. Everyone will have to bear his or her burden. As for what appears in Sūrah Al-'Ankabūt (29:13): اَثْقَالَهُمْ وَاَثْقَالًا مَّعَ اَثْقَالِهِمْ , which means that people who make others go astray will not only bear the burden of going astray personally, but will also bear the burden of having made others go astray. it does not mean that they will somehow lighten the burden of those they had caused to go astray. Instead, their burden will weigh on them as it was in its own place and because of the crime of those who made people go astray, being twofold, their burden too will become twofold, one: that of being astray and two: that of making others go astray. Therefore, there is no contradiction in these two verses. (Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī)

Explaining this verse, Sayyidnā 'Ikrimah ﵀ said: On that Day, a father would say to his son, 'You know how affectionate a father I was to you?' He will say, 'yes, your favors to me are countless. You have certainly faced many a hardship for me during the life of the world.' Then, the father will say, 'son, today I need you. Give me some of your good deeds, so that I can have my salvation.' The son will say, 'father, the return you asked for is not much, but what can I do? If I were to give that to you, I shall be facing the same situation that you are facing now,

therefore, I am sorry, I cannot help you.' Then, he will say the same thing to his wife, 'I sacrificed everything for you during the life of the world. Today, I need a few of your good deeds. Please give these to me.' The wife will give him the same answer as was given by the son.

Sayyidnā 'Ikrimah said that this is what the verse: لَاتَزِرُ وَازِرَةٌ وِّزْرَ اُخْرٰى (And no bearer will bear the burden of any other) means. Then he said that the noble Qur'ān has taken up this subject in several of its verses. At one place, it has said: لَايَجْزِىْ وَالِدٌ عَنْ وَّلَدِهٖ وَلَامَوْلُوْدٌ هُوَجَازٍ عَنْ وَّالِدِهٖ شَيْئًا that is, on that Day, neither a father would be able to have his son be spared from the punishment, nor would a son be able to do that for his father (31:33). The essential sense is that no one will save another person by carrying the burden of his sins over one's own shoulders. However, the matter of intercession (*shafa'ah*) is different. Similarly, in another verse, it was said: يَوْمَ يَفِرُّ الْمَرْءُ مِنْ اَخِيْهِ وَاُمِّهٖ وَاَبِيْهِ وَصَاحِبَتِهٖ وَبَنِيْهِ that is, on that Day, one will run from his brother and his mother and father and his wife and children (80:34,35). The purpose of running is no other but that he would be in fear, lest these people try to pass on the burden of their sins on him or come up with a request for some of his good deeds. (Ibn Kathīr)

At the beginning of the verse: وَمَآ اَنْتَ بِمُسْمِعٍ مَّنْ فِى الْقُبُوْرِ (And you cannot make hear those who are in the graves - 22.), disbelievers have been likened to the dead and believers, to the living. In congruence to this, the expression: مَنْ فِى الْقُبُوْرِ (those in the graves) here means the disbelievers. The sense is that 'the way you cannot make the dead hear you, you can also not make these living disbelievers hear you.'

This verse has itself clarified it that, at this place, making someone hear means the kind of listening that is going to be useful, effective and beneficial. Otherwise, the effort to make disbelievers listen, in the absolute sense, has remained an exercise in futility since ever. It has even been a matter of common observation that a call was beamed at them, and they did listen to it. Therefore, the verse means that 'the way you cannot bring the dead to the right path by making them hear the Divine Word because they have shifted from the avenue of deeds in the world to the arena of recompense in the Hereafter where, even if they confess to their faith, it will not be deemed as trustworthy, similar to that is the condition of the disbelievers. This proves that the negation of making the dead hear referred to in this verse means a particular listening that is

beneficial, something because of which the listener forsakes the false and takes to the true. From this presentation, it becomes clear that the present verse has nothing to do with the issue of the ability of the dead to hear. Whether or not the dead hear the living is a different issue in its own place. A detailed discussion about it has appeared in the commentary on Sūrah Ar-Rūm and Sūrah An-Naml (Ma'āriful-Qur'ān, Volume VI).

Verses 27 - 28

اَلَمْ تَرَ اَنَّ اللّٰهَ اَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَآءِ مَآءً ۚ فَاَخْرَجْنَا بِهٖ ثَمَرٰتٍ مُّخْتَلِفًا اَلْوَانُهَا ۭ وَمِنَ الْجِبَالِ جُدَدٌۢ بِيْضٌ وَّحُمْرٌ مُّخْتَلِفٌ اَلْوَانُهَا وَغَرَابِيْبُ سُوْدٌ ﴿٢٧﴾ وَمِنَ النَّاسِ وَالدَّوَآبِّ وَالْاَنْعَامِ مُخْتَلِفٌ اَلْوَانُهٗ كَذٰلِكَ ۭ اِنَّمَا يَخْشَى اللّٰهَ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ الْعُلَمٰٓؤُا ۭ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ عَزِيْزٌ غَفُوْرٌ ﴿٢٨﴾

Did you not see that Allah has sent down water from the sky? Then We brought forth with it fruits having different colors. And among the mountains there are tracks, white and red-- of different colors, and (others) utterly black. [27] **And among humans and beasts and cattle, there are those having different colors as well. Only those of His slaves fear Allah who are knowledgeable. Surely Allah is Mighty, Forgiving.** [28]

Commentary

Sequence of the Verses

Some early commentators have said that these verses return to the subject of Tauḥid, Oneness of Allah or pure monotheism supported by proofs of Divine power and mastery in nature. Some others have said that described in the previous verses were different states of people along with examples, such as: وَمَا يَسْتَوِى الْاَعْمٰى وَالْبَصِيْرُ وَلَا الظُّلُمٰتُ وَلَا النُّوْرُ وَلَا الظِّلُّ وَلَا الْحَرُوْرُ (And the blind and the sighted are not equal, (35:19) nor darkness and light, nor shade and heat of the sun - 35:20). What is being said here further clarifies that mutual difference in Divine creations is something inherent. It exists even in organic and inorganic substances, in fact, it is present not only in shapes and colors, but in traits and temperaments as well.

A subtle grammatical point

The Holy Qur'ān has mentioned different colors of fruits at the first place in Verse 27, and of the mountains at the second place. But the grammatic style is different in both places. With regard to fruits the difference of colors is mentioned by an adverbial phrase (translated above as ' having different cobblers', while in the case of mountains, it has been expressed by an adjectival phrase (translated above as ' of different cobblers'. According to the Arabic grammar, an adjective normally refers to the permanent quality of a thing, while an adverb may refer to a quality or condition that is subject to change. Keeping this in view, there may be a hint here to the effect that the difference of colors in fruits does not remain constant in a single state, rather keeps changing after brief intervals. On the contrary, there are the colors of human beings and other life forms. These are generally fast and abiding, and do not change.

And in case of mountains, used there was the word: جُدَدٌ (*judad*). This is the plural form of: جُدَّةٌ (*juddah*) the well-recognized meaning of which is that of a mini pathway also known as: جاده (*jadah*). Some respected elders have taken juddah in the sense of a tract, patch or segment that, in both situations, denotes parts of the mountains being different in colors. Out of these, white was mentioned first while black, last. In between, along with the mention of red, the expression: مُخْتَلِفٌ اَلْوَانُه (of different colors) was introduced. This could be releasing a hint that, in reality, the colors in this world are no more than two - white and black. The rest of the colors in the spectrum emerge by compounding different degrees of white and black.

The place where the word: كَذٰلِكَ (*kadhalik*: translated above by the words, 'as well') appears in verse 28 just before: كَذٰلِكَ اِنَّمَا يَخْشَى اللّٰهَ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ الْعُلَمٰٓؤُا (Only those of His slaves fear Allah who are knowledgeable), but in the translation above it has been separated from the next verse by a full stop, because this is the place of a stop (*waqf*) according to the consensus of the majority of commentators and scholars. As such, it is a sign denoting that this word is related to the previous subject, that is, the creation of all that exists in categories and kinds and different colors is a very special sign of the power and wisdom of Allah Ta'ālā.

Then there are narrations that suggest that this word is related to the

next sentence. If this interpretation is adopted, the full stop would be appropriate after the words, 'having different colors, and the word 'kadhalika' should be translated as 'similarly' in which case, it would mean that 'the way fruits, mountains, human beings and other life forms are marked out by different colors, similarly, there are different degrees among people who have the awe or fear of Allah in their hearts. Someone may have achieved its highest degree. Others may have arrived at what is less than that. Then, the whole thing depends on knowledge. Whoever has a certain degree of knowledge will have a corresponding degree of the awe or fear of Allah. (Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī)

In previous verses, it was said: إِنَّمَا تُنذِرُ الَّذِينَ يَخْشَوْنَ رَبَّهُم بِالْغَيْبِ (18) This is to give solace to the Holy Prophet ﷺ which means, 'when you warn people and convey the message of Allah to them, only those who have the awe of Allah without having seen Him get the maximum benefit out of it.' In symmetry with this, the present verse: إِنَّمَا يَخْشَى اللَّهَ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ الْعُلَمَاءُ (Only those of His slaves fear Allah who are knowledgeable - 35:28) has mentioned people about whom it can be said that they have the awe of Allah and fear Him as is His due. Then, there is another parallelism here. Mentioned earlier were disbelievers and deniers along with the different states they were submerged in. In the present verse, what has been put forth is the opposite of it. The verse talks about the men of Allah (the auliya' of Allah) particularly. The word: إِنَّمَا (*innama*) is used in the Arabic language to describe *ḥaṣr* or exclusiveness. Therefore, this sentence obviously means that only the 'Ulama' (the knowing, the learned, the initiated) fear Allah or have the genuine awe of Allah. But Tafsīr authority, Ibn 'Atiyyah and others said that the way إِنَّمَا (*innama*) is employed to show exclusiveness, it is also used to describe the singularity of something, and the later is what is meant here - that fearing Allah and remaining in awe of Him is a specially incumbent attribute of the 'Ulama'. It does not necessarily imply that those other than them have no such fear and awe in them. (Al-Baḥr ul-Muḥīṭ, Abū Ḥayyān)

And the word: عُلَمَاءُ ('Ulama') in the verse means people who have due knowledge of the being and attributes of Allah Ta'ālā and who have the fact of His power and control, and His favors and blessings, on what He has created, always in sight. In the terminology of the Qur'ān, no one is considered to be an '*alim* simply by virtue of knowing the Arabic

language, grammar and rhetoric unless he has acquired the knowledge and understanding of the attributes of Allah Ta'ālā in the manner stated above.

Explaining this verse, Ḥasan al-Baṣrī said: 'Alim is a person who fears Allah in private and in public, and likes what Allah likes him to do, and hates what is detestable in the sight of Allah.

And Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd ﷺ said:

لَيْسَ الْعِلْمُ بِكَثْرَةِ الْحَدِيْثِ وَلٰكِنَّ الْعِلْمَ عَنْ كَثْرَةِ الْخَشْيَةِ

> Memorizing many aḥādīth (or, talking a lot) is no *'ilm* (knowledge). Instead, (real) knowledge comes when one has the awe and fear of Allah with it.

In short, the degree of the fear of Allah one has shall go on to make him an 'Alim of that very degree. And Aḥmad Ibn Ṣaliḥ al-Miṣrī said: Fear of Allah cannot be recognized on the basis of someone's prolific reporting of events or abundance of knowledge, in fact, it is identified through one's adherence to the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of the Prophet. (Ibn Kathīr)

Shaykh Shahabuddīn as-Suhrawardi رحمه الله تعالىٰ said: This verse clearly indicates that a person who has no fear of Allah is no *'alim*. (Maẓharī) This is confirmed by the sayings of the early forbears of Islam (Salaf).

Sayyidnā Rabi' Ibn Anas ﷺ said:

مَنْ لَّمْ يَخْشَ فَلَيْسَ بِعَالِمٍ

One who does not fear Allah is not an *'alim*.

And early commentator, Mujāhid said:

إِنَّمَا الْعَالِمُ مَنْ خَشِيَ اللّٰهَ

Only he who fears Allah is the (real) *'alim*.

Someone asked Sa'd Ibn Ibrāhīm: Who knows Divine Law at its best in the city of Madīnah? He said: أَتْقَاهُمْ لِرَبِّهٖ (He who is the most fearing of his Lord).

And Sayyidnā 'Alī al-Murtada ﷺ defined a Faqih (master of Islamic jurisprudence) by saying:

إِنَّ الْفَقِيْهَ حَقَّ الْفَقِيْهِ مَنْ لَّمْ يَقنط النَّاسَ مِنْ رَّحْمَةِ اللّٰهِ وَلَمْ يرخص لَهُمْ فِىْ مَعَاصِى اللّٰهِ تَعَالىٰ، وَلَمْ يُؤْمِنْهُمْ مِّنْ عَذَابِ اللّٰهِ تَعَالىٰ وَلَمْ يَدَعِ الْقُرْاٰنَ رَغْبَةً عَنْهُ الىٰ غَيْرِهٖ اَنَّه لَاخَيْرَ فِىْ عِبَادَةٍ لاَّعِلْمَ فِيْهَا وَلَا عِلْمٍ لَّا فِقْهَ فِيْهِ وَلَا قِرَاءَةٍ لاَّ تَدَبُّرَ فِيْهِ (قرطبى)

A Faqih, perfect as he must be, is he who would not make people lose hope in the mercy of Allah, nor leave them free to indulge in acts of disobedience to Him, nor give them the guarantee of remaining safe from the punishment of Allah, nor forsake the Qur'ān by indulging in pursuits other than it. (And he said): Verily, there is no good in an act of worship that is without knowledge, and there is no good in a knowledge that is without understanding, and there is no recitation (Qira'ah of the Qur'ān) without deliberation in it. (Qurṭubī)

The clarifications appearing above also help remove the doubt about many 'Ulama' who do not seem to have the kind of awe and fear of Allah required of them. These clarifications tell us that, in the sight of Allah, the bland knowledge of Arabic is not what *'ilm* is, and certainly, the one who is proficient in it is not an 'Alim. Anyone who does not have the fear of Allah in his heart is simply not an 'Alim in the terminology of the Qur'ān. However, at times, awe and fear of Allah are rooted in one's creed and reason because of which one adheres to the injunctions of the Sharī'ah as a matter of obligation. Then, there are occasions when this awe and fear of Allah become the very state of one's existence and rise to the degree of a firmly ingrained asset whereby the readiness to follow the Sharī'ah becomes a natural reflex. The first degree of the awe and fear of Allah is mandatory and, for an 'Alim, necessary. The second degree is certainly superior and sublime, but not necessary. (Bayān ul-Qur'ān)

Verses 29 - 37

إِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ يَتْلُوْنَ كِتٰبَ اللّٰهِ وَاَقَامُوا الصَّلٰوةَ وَاَنْفَقُوْا مِمَّا رَزَقْنٰهُمْ سِرًّا
وَّعَلَانِيَةً يَّرْجُوْنَ تِجَارَةً لَّنْ تَبُوْرَ ﴿٢٩﴾ لِيُوَفِّيَهُمْ اُجُوْرَهُمْ وَيَزِيْدَهُمْ
مِّنْ فَضْلِهٖ ۭ اِنَّهٗ غَفُوْرٌ شَكُوْرٌ ﴿٣٠﴾ وَالَّذِيْٓ اَوْحَيْنَآ اِلَيْكَ مِنَ الْكِتٰبِ
هُوَ الْحَقُّ مُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ ۭ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ بِعِبَادِهٖ لَخَبِيْرٌۢ بَصِيْرٌ ﴿٣١﴾
ثُمَّ اَوْرَثْنَا الْكِتٰبَ الَّذِيْنَ اصْطَفَيْنَا مِنْ عِبَادِنَا ۚ فَمِنْهُمْ ظَالِمٌ لِّنَفْسِهٖ ۚ

وَمِنْهُمْ مُّقْتَصِدٌ ۚ وَمِنْهُمْ سَابِقٌۢ بِالْخَيْرٰتِ بِاِذْنِ اللّٰهِ ؕ ذٰلِكَ هُوَ
الْفَضْلُ الْكَبِيْرُ ﴿٣٢﴾ جَنّٰتُ عَدْنٍ يَّدْخُلُوْنَهَا يُحَلَّوْنَ فِيْهَا مِنْ اَسَاوِرَ
مِنْ ذَهَبٍ وَّلُؤْلُؤًا ۚ وَلِبَاسُهُمْ فِيْهَا حَرِيْرٌ ﴿٣٣﴾ وَقَالُوا الْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ
الَّذِيْٓ اَذْهَبَ عَنَّا الْحَزَنَ ؕ اِنَّ رَبَّنَا لَغَفُوْرٌ شَكُوْرُ ﴿٣٤﴾ الَّذِيْٓ اَحَلَّنَا
دَارَالْمُقَامَةِ مِنْ فَضْلِهٖ ۚ لَايَمَسُّنَا فِيْهَا نَصَبٌ وَّلَا يَمَسُّنَا فِيْهَا لُغُوْبٌ
﴿٣٥﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا لَهُمْ نَارُجَهَنَّمَ ۚ لَايُقْضٰى عَلَيْهِمْ فَيَمُوْتُوْا وَلَا
يُخَفَّفُ عَنْهُمْ مِّنْ عَذَابِهَا ؕ كَذٰلِكَ نَجْزِيْ كُلَّ كَفُوْرٍ ﴿٣٦﴾ وَهُمْ
يَصْطَرِخُوْنَ فِيْهَا ۚ رَبَّنَآ اَخْرِجْنَا نَعْمَلْ صَالِحًا غَيْرَ الَّذِيْ كُنَّا
نَعْمَلُ ؕ اَوَلَمْ نُعَمِّرْكُمْ مَّايَتَذَكَّرُ فِيْهِ مَنْ تَذَكَّرَ وَجَآءَكُمُ النَّذِيْرُ ؕ
فَذُوْقُوْا فَمَا لِلظّٰلِمِيْنَ مِنْ نَّصِيْرٍ ﴿٣٧﴾

Surely those who recite Allah's Book and have established salah and have spent, from what We have provided them, secretly and openly,--- they hope for a trade that will never crash, [29] so that He pays them their rewards in full, and gives them more out of His grace. Surely He is Most-Forgiving, Very- Appreciative. [30] And the Book We have revealed to you is the Truth, confirming what was (revealed) before it. Surely Allah , in respect of His slaves, is All-Aware, All-Seeing. [31] Then We conveyed the Book as an heritage to those of Our slaves whom We chose. Then, some of them are those who wrong their own selves, and some of them are mediocre, and some of them are those who outpace (others) in righteous deeds with Allah's permission. That is the great bounty, [32] gardens of eternity they enter. They will be ornamented with bracelets of gold and with pearls, and their dress therein will be (of) silk. [33] And they will say, " Praise be to Allah who has removed all sorrow from us. Surely our Lord is Most-Forgiving, Very-Appreciative, [34] who, out of His grace, has made us land at a home of eternal living where neither we are touched by weariness, nor are we touched by boredom." [35] And those who disbelieve, for them shall be the fire of Jahannam; neither they will be

sentenced to death, so that they die, nor will its torment be lightened for them. It is in this way that We punish every infidel. [36] **And they will be crying therein, " Our Lord, take us out from here, and we will act righteously, not in the way we have been doing before." (Allah will say to them,) " Did We not give you an age in your life in which lesson could have been learnt by the one who wished to take lesson? And (furthermore) the warner had (also) come to you. So, have a taste, because the wrongdoers will have no supporter.** [37]

Commentary

Mentioned earlier, in verse 28, there was a quality of true 'Ulama' who acknowledge Allah. This quality related to the heart. It was to have Allah's awe in the heart. In the first of the present verses (29), some those qualities of the same blessed people, the *awliya'* or men of Allah, are mentioned that find expression through outward parts of the body. Out of these, the first quality is the tilawah (recitation) of the Qur'ān. This denotes the people who recite the Book of Allah constantly. The use of the aorist tense (*mudari'*) in: يَتْلُوْنَ (*yatluna*: they recite) releases a hint in this direction. Then, there are other elders who have taken: يَتْلُوْنَ (*yatluna*) at this place in its literal sense, that is, they follow the Qur'ān in deed. But, the first Tafsīr is weightier, even though, it also stands determined from the context that recitation can be trustworthy only when it brings forth actions in accordance with the Qur'ān. But, the word: تِلاوت (tilawah or recitation) used here appears in its recognized sense. Similarly, Mutarrif Ibn 'Abdullāh Ibn Shikhkhir رحمه الله تعالى said: هٰذِهٖ اٰيَةُ الْقُرَّاءِ (This verse is for al-qurra'), the phoneticians of the Qur'ān, who make the recitation of the Qur'ān their special activity of life.

The second quality they have is the establishing of Ṣalah and the third is the spending of their wealth in the way of Allah. When the text says 'secretly and openly', it indicates that it is often better to spend secretly in order to stay safe from *riya'* (show off) in acts of worship. But, there are occasions when religious considerations require that it should be done openly, as in the case of congregational prayers for which the command is to call adhan from minarets and perform salah openly with the highest possible attendance. Similarly, there are occasions when it is necessary to let spending in the way of Allah be open in order to persuade others to do the same. Muslim jurists have laid out details in the matter of

salah and spending in the way of Allah. According to them, when it is fard (obligatory), Wājib (necessary) or sunnah mu'akkadah (emphasized sunnah), doing this openly is better. Other than this, when doing *nafl* salah, it is better to do it privately. Similarly, in instances when spending one's wealth is Farḍ or Wājib, such as, the obligatory Zakāh or sadaqatul-fitr or qurbani, spending openly on these is better and worthy of more merit. As for the rest of voluntary charities (Ṣadaqatun-nāfilah), spending these secretly carries more merit and grace.

From people who carry these three qualities in their person, that is, they recite the Qur'ān constantly, establish salah as due and spend in the way of Allah cheerfully, it is also expected that they would not simply stop at Farḍ and Wājib spending, rather, would also be contributing to voluntary charities. Identified next, there is yet another attribute of theirs: يَرْجُوْنَ تِجَارَةً لَّنْ تَبُوْرَ (they hope for a trade that will never crash,). The expression: لَنْ تَبُوْرَ (*lan tabur*) is a derivation from: بَوَار (*bawar*) which means to go waste. The verse means that believers having these attributes hope to go in a trade that never runs into a loss. The very word: يَرْجُوْنَ (*yarjun*: hope) indicates that a believer has no room for certainty in any good deed done by him or her in this mortal world. No one can say it will definitely bring forgiveness to them and that they will get its reward for sure - because, no matter how good one is in deeds, one simply cannot fulfill the right of reverence and worship Allah Ta'ālā has on His servants. Therefore, forgiveness for one and all will not be possible without the grace of Allah Ta'ālā, as has been clearly stated in a Ḥadīth. In addition to that, with the doing of everything good, one should not neglect the danger of some secret trick of Satan or one's own self getting mixed up with so many good deeds because of which they do not remain acceptable. Or, on occasions, along with a good deed, some bad deed gets to be committed which in turn stops the good deed from being accepted. Therefore, by introducing the word: يَرْجُوْنَ (yarjun: hope) in the verse, it was pointed out that even after having become particular with all possible good deeds, no one has the right to become sure of his or her salvation and of high ranks that follow in its wake. The most one can do is hope. (Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī)

Good deeds likened with trade

In this verse, good deeds mentioned above have been likened to a

trading activity - as it was done in another verse where Faith and Jihād in the way of Allah have been expressed as trade or business deal:

هَلْ اَدُلُّكُمْ عَلٰى تِجَارَةٍ تُنْجِيْكُمْ مِّنْ عَذَابٍ اَلِيْمٍ. تُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِاللّٰهِ وَرَسُوْلِهٖ وَتُجَاهِدُوْنَ فِيْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ بِاَمْوَالِكُمْ وَاَنْفُسِكُمْ

> O those who believe, shall I tell you about a trade that saves you from a painful punishment? (It is that) you believe in Allah and His Messenger, and carry out Jihād in His way with your riches and your lives - Aṣ-Ṣaff, 61:10).

It has been characterized as trade in the sense that a trader invests his capital and time in some venture only when he hopes that by doing so, his capital will increase and he will profit by it. But, every trading activity in this world is hemmed with the probability of loss along with the hope of profit. In the present verse, by adding the word: لَّنْ تَبُوْرَ (lan tabur) to trade, it was pointed out that in this deal made for the sake of the benefits of the Hereafter, there was no probability of a loss. Then, the good people of Allah who take pains to do what is good and right do not go about running a business as businesses are commonly run. Instead of that, they hope to engage in a trading activity that never suffers a loss. As for the mention of the stance of hope on the part of such people, it serves as a delicate hint in the direction that Allah Ta'ālā is the noblest of the noble and the most generous of the generous, so He will not sever the hope of the hopeful, instead, would fulfill it. In fact, in the next sentence, it was also said that their hope is limited to receiving only a full return of their deed, but Allah Ta'ālā would, in His infinite mercy, bestow on them much more, far more than they would have ever hoped: لِيُوَفِّيَهُمْ اُجُوْرَهُمْ وَيَزِيْدَهُمْ مِّنْ فَضْلِهٖ (so that He pays them their rewards in full, and gives them more out of His grace - 30). The word: لِيُوَفِّيَهُمْ (liyuwaffiahum: so that He pays them in full) is connected with: لَّنْ تَبُوْرَ (lan tabur: has no loss), that is, this trade of theirs not only that it admits of no loss, but that it will also bring their return and reward in full, and in addition to that, Allah Ta'ālā will bless them, out of His grace, with much more, rather, far beyond their fondest hopes of returns.

Included within this grace and increase is the promise of Allah Ta'ālā that He rewards the deed of a believer multiplied many times, the lowest denominator of which could be ten times of the deed, and the highest could reach seven hundred times, even higher than that. Then, also

included in this grace is the acceptance of their intercession on behalf of sinners - as it appears in a Ḥadīth narrated by Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd ﷺ where he has reported the explanation of this grace from the Holy Prophet ﷺ: 'These people will intercede on behalf of anyone who had done some favor to them during the life of the mortal world. Then, despite being deserving of the punishment of Jahannam, such people will stand delivered of it by virtue of their intercession.' (Tafsīr Maẓharī with reference to Ibn Abī Ḥatim) (And it is obvious that intercession will be possible only for the people of faith. No one will be allowed to intercede on behalf of a disbeliever) Similarly, the foremost part of this grace is that they will have an opportunity to see Allah Ta'ālā

The word: ثُمَّ (*thumma*: Then) in verse 32: ثُمَّ اَوْرَثْنَا الْكِتٰبَ الَّذِيْنَ اصْطَفَيْنَا مِنْ عِبَادِنَا (Then We conveyed the Book as an heritage to those of Our slaves whom We chose.) serves as a conjunction to denote that the two things mentioned before and after it, despite having common characteristic, are marked by precedence and succession. What comes first has precedence, and that which comes after, succeeds. In addition to that, on some occasions, this precedence and succession takes effect in terms of time while, on some others, in terms of rank and degree. In this verse, the word: ثُمَّ (*thumma*: Then) is عطف (*'atf*: Conjunctive particle) connected to the word: اَوْحَيْنَا (*awḥaina*: We revealed). It means: This Book, that is, the Qur'ān which is nothing but the truth, and confirms all earlier Scriptures, We first sent to you as a revelation. After that, We made those We chose out of Our servants inherit the Book. The earlier and later of it, or the precedence and succession of it in terms of rank and degree is already very obvious in the sense that the sending of the Qur'ān to the Holy Prophet ﷺ through the medium of wahy (revelation) has precedence in rank and degree. Then, its bestowal on the community of Sayyidnā Muḥammad al-Muṣṭafa ﷺ takes effect in succession to it. And if making the Muslim ummah the inheritor of the Qur'ān is taken to mean that he ﷺ, rather than leave behind his legacy in the form of wealth and lands, left behind the Book of Allah as his legacy or inheritance - as borne by Ḥadīth: 'Prophets do not leave coins of gold and silver as inheritance: They leave (true) knowledge as their legacy.' Or, "'Ulama' are inheritors of prophets" - then, in those terms, this precedence and succession could also reflect a time frame in the sense that 'We have blessed you with this

Book. After that, you passed it on to your ummah as its inheritor.' To make someone inherit something means to bestow it on someone, give it as legacy, gift. This act of bestowal when expressed as inheritance points out to the fact that the way an inheritor gets his or her share from the inheritance without he or she having done anything to acquire it, similarly, this wealth of the noble Qur'ān has been given as a gift to these chosen servant without any effort on their part.

A peculiarity of the Muslim Community, and that of its 'Ulama'

According to the majority of commentators, the sentence: اَلَّذِيْنَ اصْطَفَيْنَا مِنْ عِبَادِنَا (those of Our slaves whom We chose) in verse 32, means the ummah (community) of Sayyidnā Muḥammad al-Muṣṭafa ﷺ, its 'Ulama' - directly, and others, through the 'Ulama'. Reporting a Tafsīr of this verse from Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه, 'Alī Ibn Abī Ṭalḥah has said: The expression: اَلَّذِيْنَ اصْطَفَيْنَا (those whom We chose) means the the ummah of the Holy Prophet ﷺ). These are the people Allah Ta'ālā has made the inheritors of every Book He has revealed (that is, the Qur'ān, as being the Book that confirms and preserves all previous Scriptures, encompasses the contents of all revealed Books. Being its inheritor amounts to inheriting all revealed Books). Then he (Ibn 'Abbās) said: فَظَالِمُهُمْ يُغْفَرُلَه، وَمُقْتَصِدُهُمْ يُحَاسَبُ حِسَابًا يَّسِيْرًا وَّسَابِقُهُمْ يُدْخَلُ الْجَنَّةَ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ that is, even the unjust one from among them will be forgiven, and those who pursue a middle course among them will pass through a reckoning that is easy, while those who excel in good deeds will enter Jannah without reckoning. (Ibn Kathīr)

The word: اِصْطَفَيْنَا (istafaina: We chose) used in this verse shows the great honor bestowed upon the Muslim ummah, because this word: اِصْطِفَاء (*istifa'*: to choose) has frequently appeared for prophets in the Holy Qur'ān as in: اَللّٰهُ يَصْطَفِىْ مِنَ الْمَلٰٓئِكَةِ رُسُلًا وَّمِنَ النَّاسِ (Allah chooses messengers from the angels and from men. - al-Ḥajj, 22:75) and in: اِنَّ اللّٰهَ اصْطَفٰٓى اٰدَمَ وَنُوْحًا وَّاٰلَ اِبْرٰهِيْمَ وَاٰلَ عِمْرَانَ عَلَى الْعٰلَمِيْنَ (Verily, Allah has chosen Ādam and Nūḥ and the House of Ibrāhīm and the House of 'Imrān over the worlds - Al-'Imrān, 3:33). In the verse under study, Allah Ta'ālā has put the Muslim ummah in line with the chosen ones, the prophets and the angels, although the degrees of such choice vary. The choice of prophets and angels occupies a higher degree, while the choice of the Muslim ummah, one that is posterior.

Three kinds of the Muslim ummah

The sentence: فَمِنْهُمْ ظَالِمٌ لِّنَفْسِهٖ وَمِنْهُمْ مُّقْتَصِدٌ وَّمِنْهُمْ سَابِقٌۢ بِالْخَيْرَاتِ (Then, some of

them are those who wrong their own selves, and some of them are mediocre, and some of them are those who outpace (others) in righteous deeds with Allah's permission - 35:32) is virtually an explanation of the first sentence of the verse. In other words, it means that 'there are three kinds of Our servants We have chosen and have made them inherit the Qur'ān: (1) The unjust (2) The moderate (3) The excellent.

Imām Ibn Kathīr has explained these three kinds by saying: The one who wrong himself means a person who falls short in fulfilling some obligatory duties, and goes on to commit some of what is forbidden as well. And the one who follows the middle course is a person who fulfills all legally binding obligations and avoids everything forbidden, but on occasions, leaves out what has been recommended and falls into what is reprehensible. And excellent is the one who goes ahead of everyone in good deeds, fulfills all obligatory and recommended duties and avoids everything declared forbidden or considered reprehensible and goes on to leave what is allowed to him because of his devotion to acts of worship or because of some doubt in its lawfulness.

This is what Ibn Kathīr has said. Other commentators have reported many more sayings while explaining these three kinds. Tafsīr Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī mentions forty-three sayings with reference to at-Tahrir. But, on deliberation, the outcome of most is the same as stated with reference to Ibn Kathīr.

A doubt and its answer

The explanation given above proves that الَّذِيْنَ اصْطَفَيْنَا (those whom We chose) means the Muslim ummah that has three kinds and that its first kind - the unjust - is also included among the chosen servants of Allah. Taking this probability to be obviously remote, some people have said that this kind of people (who have wronged themselves) is excluded from the definition of: الَّذِيْنَ اصْطَفَيْنَا (We chose) and from the Muslim ummah. But, it already stands proved from many authentic aḥādīth that each one of these three kinds relate to Muslim ummah and are not excluded from the characteristic of: اصْطَفَيْنَا (We chose). In fact, this is the ultimate merit of the believing servants of the Muslim ummah that even those who are somewhat wanting in the matter of deeds are also sharers in this supreme distinction. At this place, Ibn Kathīr has put together all those Ḥadīth narrations, some of which are being cited below:

According to a narration of Sayyidnā Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī ﷺ, the Holy Prophet ﷺ said about these three kinds of: اَلَّذِیْنَ اصْطَفَیْنَا (those We chose): 'They rank alike and alike they are in Jannah, all of them.' The expression 'being in one rank' means that all of them will be forgiven and all of them will go to Jannah - not that there will be no variance among them in terms of their ranks.

Then, there is a Ḥadīth reported from Sayyidnā Abū-d- Darda' ﷺ which is supported by several chains of authorities. Ibn Kathīr has documented all of them. One of these has been reported by Ibn Jarir from Sayyidnā Abū Thabit ﷺ who, when he went to the Masjid one of those days, found Sayyidnā Abū-d- Darda' ﷺ already sitting there. Sayyidnā Abū Thabit went close, sat down by his side and started making a prayer: اَللّٰھُمَّ اٰنِسْ وَحْشَتِیْ وَارْحَمْ غُرْبَتِیْ وَیَسِّرْلِیْ جَلِیْسًا صَالِحًا ('O Allah, mollify the loneliness and anxiety of my heart, and have mercy on me in my state of homelessness, and make it easy on me by (sending) a good companion'). (At this point, it is worth recalling that the great emphasis was placed by the early forbears of Islam on the quest for a good companion. They took this need to be an important objective in life and considered it to be a cure of all anxieties, so much so that they would raise their hands of prayer before Allah and ask Him that they be blessed with one). When Sayyidnā Abū-d- Darda' ﷺ heard this prayer, he said, 'If you are honest in your prayer (for a companion), then, I am more fortunate than you (in the sense that Allah blessed me with a good companion like yourself, on the spot, without asking). Then, he said, 'I relate to you a Ḥadīth I have heard from the Holy Prophet ﷺ. But, since the time I heard it, I did not have the occasion to relate it before anyone. Here is the Ḥadīth: He mentioned this verse: ثُمَّ اَوْرَثْنَا الْكِتٰبَ الَّذِیْنَ اصْطَفَیْنَا (Then We conveyed the Book as an heritage to those of Our slaves whom We chose - 32). Then, he said, 'As for those who race ahead of others in the matter of good deeds, out of the three kinds, they will go to Jannah without reckoning. And those who are in the middle will face an accounting that will be easy on them. And the unjust, the ones who fall short in deeds and are prone to slip into sins, will be overwhelmed with remorse at this juncture. After that, they too will be asked to enter Jannah and all their sorrows will stand removed from them.' It finds mention in the next verse: وَقَالُوا الْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ الَّذِیْٓ اَذْهَبَ عَنَّا الْحَزَنَ (" Praise be to Allah who has removed all sorrow from us. Surely our Lord

is Most-Forgiving, Very-Appreciative,").

And at-Ṭabarānī reports from Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd ﷺ that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said, 'وَكُلُّهُمْ مِنْ هٰذِهِ الْأُمَّةِ' It means that each of the three kinds will be from this very Ummah of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ.

Abū Dāwūd at-Ṭayalisi reports from 'Uqbah Ibn Ṣahban Hana'i that he asked the Tafsīr of this verse from Ummul-Mu'minin, Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضی اللہ عنہا. She said, "My son, all these three kinds are to go to Paradise. Out of these, those who were ahead of everyone in good deeds were people who passed away during the period of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. He himself testified that they are to go to Jannah. And those who took the middle course are people who followed the former as their role models to the extent that they joined up with them. As for those who have been unjust to themselves, they are people like me and you!"

Certainly great was the modesty of Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضی اللہ عنہا that she counted herself too as part of the third kind, that is, among those who are unjust to themselves - although, according to very clear statements in sound and authentic aḥādīth, she ranks high among the very first and foremost people (as-sabiqun al-awwalun) of early Islam.

And Ibn Jarīr has reported from Muḥammad Ibn-ul- Ḥanafiyyah رحمہ اللہ تعالیٰ who said, 'This ummah is a community of people blessed with the mercy of Allah so en masse that even the unjust one in it stands forgiven, and the one of the middle course is in Jannah and the one way ahead in good deeds enjoys high ranks with Allah.'

And Sayyidnā Muḥammad Ibn 'Alī al-Bāqir ﷺ, while explaining: ظَالِمٌ لِّنَفْسِهٖ (*ẓālim linafsihī*: who wrong himself), said: اَلَّذِیْ خَلَطَ عَمَلًا صَالِحًا وَّاٰخَرَ سَیِّئًا meaning: 'a person who mixes good and bad deeds.'

The great merit of the 'Ulama' of the Muslim ummah

In this verse, Allah Ta'ālā has said that He has made a particular people to become inheritors of His Book, people who are chosen and honored ones from among His servants. Then, it is also obvious that 'Ulama' are the direct inheritors of the knowledge relating to the Book of Allah and the mission of prophets, as it has also been stated in the Ḥadīth: اَلْعُلَمَاءُ وَرَثَةُ الْاَنْبِیَاءِ ('Ulama' inherit [the legacy of] prophets). In sum,

people who have been so blessed by Allah Ta'ālā that they engage in the pursuit of the fields of knowledge relating to the Qur'ān and Sunnah with unalloyed sincerity is, in itself, a sign of their being men of Allah worthy of the task. This is as it has been supported by a narration of Sayyidnā Tha'labah Ibn al-Hakam ﷺ that reports the Holy Prophet ﷺ to have said, 'Allah Ta'ālā will address the 'Ulama' of the Muslim community on the Day of Judgment and say, "I had placed My knowledge and wisdom in your chests, for I had intended to forgive you irrespective of the nature of your actual deeds." (From the earlier presentation, it is already established that a person who has no awe and fear of Allah is simply not counted as one of the 'Ulama'. Therefore, this address will be to people for whom the awe and fear of Allah has become their natural reflex. Hence, it would be virtually impossible for them to indulge in sins carelessly. Yes, on occasions, they too could slip or make a mistake under the dictates of human temperament. This very aspect was alluded to in the Ḥadīth mentioned above where it was said - no matter the nature of your deeds, forgiveness is destined for you).

All these narrations have been taken from Ibn Kathīr. The last Ḥadīth reported from Sayyidnā Tha'labah ﷺ has also been reported by at-Tabarani with all chains of authority cited by him being reliable. (Tafsīr Maẓharī) And in Tafsīr Maẓharī, the subject of the same Ḥadīth has been reported from Abū 'Umar San'ani with reference to Ibn 'Asakir. Similarly, according to a narration of Sayyidnā Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī ﷺ, the Holy Prophet ﷺ said, 'On the Day of Resurrection (*al-maḥshar*), Allah Ta'ālā will gather all His servants together. Then, He will assemble the 'Ulama' from among them at a prominent place and will say to them:

إِنِّي لَمْ أَضَعْ عِلْمِيْ فِيكُمْ إِلَّا لعلمي بِكُمْ وَلَمْ أَضَعْ عِلْمِيْ فِيكُمْ لِأُعَذِّبَكُمْ اِنْطَلِقُوا قَدْ غَفَرْتُ لَكُمْ

I had placed My *'ilm* in you since I knew you (that you will fulfill the due rights of this *'ilm,* the knowledge given to you) and I had not placed My *'ilm* in you so that I punish you. Go, I have forgiven you - Maẓharī.

Special Note

In this verse, mentioned first was the category of the unjust, then of those following the middle course, and finally, of those who are ahead in good deeds. The reason for this order may, perhaps, be that the number of

those unjust to them selves is larger, those following the middle course are less than them and those ahead in good deeds happen to be less than the later. Thus, those whose number was large were made to appear first.

A close look at the last sentence of verse 32 and the statement in verse 33: ذٰلِكَ هُوَالْفَضْلُ الْكَبِيْرُ جَنّٰتُ عَدْنٍ يَّدْخُلُوْنَهَا يُحَلَّوْنَ فِيْهَا مِنْ اَسَاوِرَمِنْ ذَهَبٍ وَّلُؤْلُؤًا وَلِبَاسُهُمْ فِيْهَا حَرِيْرٌ (That is the great bounty, gardens of eternity they enter. They will be ornamented with bracelets of gold and with pearls, and their dress therein will be (of) silk. - 35:32,33) shows that in the beginning of verse 32, Allah Ta'ālā has pointed out to three kinds of His chosen servants following which it was said: ذٰلِكَ هُوَالْفَضْلُ الْكَبِيْرُ : That is, 'this counting of all these three among His chosen servants is the great bounty.' Next comes the statement relating to their recompense - that they will go to Jannah, that they will be given bracelets of gold and ornaments of pearls to wear and that their dress shall be of silk.

For men, in this mortal world, it is haram to wear ornaments of gold, and dresses made of silk too. To compensate, they will have these in Jannah. Let there be no doubt about it, something like: Ornaments are for women, not for men in whose case these do not suit. The reason is simple. Taking the conditions prevailing in the 'Akhirah (Hereafter) and Jannah (Paradise) on the analogy of conditions prevailing in the mortal world is unreasonable, even dumb.

According to a narration of Sayyidnā Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī ﷺ, the Holy Prophet ﷺ said, 'Crowns on the heads of the people of Jannah will be studded with pearls. Light emitted by the smallest of its pearls will fill the entire horizon from the East to the West.' (Reported by at-Tirmidhī and al-Ḥakim, who has authenticated it, and by al-Baihaqi - from Maẓharī)

Imām al-Qurṭubī said: Commentators explain that every inmate of Jannah will have bracelets to wear on their hands - of gold, silver, and pearls. About this celestial bracelet, a verse mentions 'of silver' (76:21) while others, 'of gold' (18:31; 22:23; 35:33; 43:53). The present explanation brings both verses in correspondence.

A person who will use utensils of gold and silver and dresses of silk will remain deprived of these in Jannah

Sayyidnā Hudhaifah ﷺ says that he heard the Holy Prophet ﷺ saying, 'Do not wear dresses of silk and do not drink water in utensils of

gold and silver, nor use plates made of these in eating food - because, these things are for disbelievers in this world and for you, in the Hereafter.' (al-Bukhari and Muslim)

And Sayyidnā 'Umar ﷺ reports that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said, 'Any male who wore a dress made of silk in this world will not wear it in the Hereafter' (al-Bukhari and Muslim). And a narration of Sayyidnā Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī ﷺ says, 'A male who wears a dress made of silk in this world will remain deprived of it in the Hereafter, even if he were to go to Jannah.' (Maẓharī)

The next verse (34): وَقَالُوا الْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ الَّذِیْٓ اَذْهَبَ عَنَّا الْحَزَنَ (And they will say, "Praise be to Allah who has removed all sorrow from us.") tells us about what the people of Paradise will say when they enter Jannah. What does 'sorrow' mean at this place? Leading commentators have given various explanations about it. However, the truth of the matter is that all sorrows stand included therein. In this world, one may become a king or a prophet or a saint, yet no one can escape it:

دریں دنیا کسے بے غم نباشد......☆......وگر باشد بنی آدم نباشد

In this world, no one is free of sorrow
And if one is, one is not a human being.

In this world of our experience, no one good or bad can get away from one or the other concern, anxiety or sorrow. Therefore, people of wisdom call this world a home of sorrows. The sorrow the removal of which this verse mentions includes all these mortal states of concern. The second concern is that of the Day of Judgment and Resurrection. The third concern is that of Reckoning of Deeds, and the fourth, that of the punishment of Jahannam. From the people of Jannah, Allah Ta'ālā will remove all these concerns, anxieties and sorrows.

According to a narration of Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Umar ﷺ, the Holy Prophet ﷺ said, 'For the people who uphold the Kalīmah of la ilaha il-lal-lah (there is no God but Allah), there is no fear and loneliness at the time of death, nor in the grave, nor when they rise again on the Day of Resurrection - as if I am virtually seeing them rise from their respective graves saying: اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ الَّذِیْٓ اَذْهَبَ عَنَّا الْحَزَنَ (Praise be to Allah who has removed all sorrow from us.").' (Reported by at-Ṭabarānī, Maẓharī)

At this point, let us refer back to the Ḥadīth of Sayyidnā Abū-D-Darda' ﷺ that has appeared a little earlier. There it has been stated that it will be said by the unjust, those who have wronged their own selves. This is because they would initially face great anxiety on the plains of Resurrection but, finally, when they are asked to enter Paradise, it will stand removed. This statement does not contradict the Ḥadīth of Sayyidnā Ibn 'Umar ﷺ appearing immediately above. Again, the reason is that the person who has wronged himself would have an additional sorrow on his hands, more serious than that of others, on the plains of the Resurrection as well - something that will stand removed at the time of one's entry into the Paradise. In short, this is a statement that will be made by all people of Jannah, no matter to which kind they belong, to the ones who have been ahead of all in good deeds, or to those who have followed the middle course, or to those who have been unjust to their own selves. But, the thought of everyone's roster of sorrows being separate from each other is not too far out.

Imām Abū Bakr al-Jaṣṣāṣ said: It is the typical state of a believer that he never remains free of concerns while in this world. The Holy Prophet ﷺ has said that the world is a prison for the believer. This is the reason why it appears in the accounts of the lives of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and his great Ṣaḥabah that these blessed souls used to look sad fairly often.

In verse 35: الَّذِىٓ اَحَلَّنَا دَارَ الْمُقَامَةِ مِنْ فَضْلِهٖ ۚ لَا يَمَسُّنَا فِيْهَا نَصَبٌ وَّلَا يَمَسُّنَا فِيْهَا لُغُوْبٌ (who, out of His grace, has made us land at a home of eternal living where neither we are touched by weariness, nor are we touched by boredom."), some characteristics of Jannah have been described: (1) That it is an eternal home with no danger of any lapse of time, or expulsion from there at any time. (2) That no one will face any sorrow while there. (3) That no one there will experience the least fatigue or boredom, as it happens in the mortal world where one needs to sleep after work. Life in Jannah will be free from this too. This subject also finds mention in some narrations of Ḥadīth. (Maẓharī)

When the people in Jahannam will plead with their Lord that they be delivered from its punishment, so that they could do good deeds then, and not do the bad ones they did earlier, at that time they will be told: اَوَلَمْ نُعَمِّرْكُمْ مَّا يَتَذَكَّرُ فِيْهِ مَنْ تَذَكَّرَ وَجَآءَكُمُ النَّذِيْرُ ("Did We not give you an age in your life in which lesson could have been learnt by the one who wished to take

lesson - 37) Sayyidnā 'Alī Ibn Ḥusain Zain ul-'Abidīn ﷺ said, "It means the age of seventeen years." And Qatadah رحمه الله تعالیٰ gave the age as eighteen years, meaning thereby the age of puberty. And the difference of seventeen and eighteen is possible in determining the age of puberty, as someone may reach puberty at the age of seventeen and someone else at, eighteen. In the Sharī'ah, the age of puberty is the first line of demarcation after having crossed which a person is Divinely blessed with enough reason, so that one can understand what is good or bad in his or her case. Therefore, this address will be to disbelievers at large irrespective of their ages being long or short. However, the one who had a long lease of life, yet did not come to his senses, saw all sorts of physical proofs scattered around and heard the teachings of the prophets, still did not recognize the truth - so then, this one will be more blameworthy.

In short, the person who saw nothing beyond the age of puberty, he too was given enough power of discrimination by nature that he could have used to distinguish between the true and the false. When he failed to do that, he too is deserving of censure and punishment. But, the person who was given long years to live, the warning of Allah stood served against him in a more conclusive degree. Then, if he could still not shake off his disbelief and disobedience, he would be more deserving of punishment and blame.

Sayyidnā 'Alī al-Murtada ﷺ said, 'The age whereupon Allah Ta'ālā has asked His sinning servants to beware is that of sixty years.' Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ, according to one narration, has given it as forty years while, according to another narration, as sixty. He has said that this is the age when the argument and warrant of Allah stands served conclusively on an erring person who, then, is left with no room for making excuses. Ibn Kathīr has given preference to the second Ḥadīth of Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ.

From the presentation made above, it is clear that there is no contradiction in the narrations pointing out to the age of seventeen / eighteen and sixty. Though, someone at the age of seventeen/eighteen is able to distinguish between the true and the false. Therefore, one has been obligated with precepts of the Sharī'ah from this benchmark this very age of puberty. But, the age of sixty is such a long period of time that, should one still fail to recognize the truth, there remains no room for

making any more excuses. Against such a person, the argument of Allah stands firmly established. Therefore, the aggregate ages of people in this blessed ummah are destined to be between sixty and seventy years - as said in Ḥadīth:

اَعْمَارُ اُمَّتِیْ مَابَیْنَ السِّتِّیْنَ اِلَی السَّبْعِیْنَ وَاَقَلُّهُمْ مَّنْ یَّجُوْزُ ذٰلِکَ

> The ages of my ummah will be in between sixty and seventy and there will be few of those who will exceed that - reported by al-Tirmidhi and Ibn Majah, Ibn Kathīr.

Towards the end of the verse (37), it was said: وَجَآءَكُمُ النَّذِيْرُ (And (furthermore) the warner had (also) come to you.). Given here is a hint that Allah Ta'ālā gives one from the age one attains puberty enough ability to rationalize and recognize at least his or her creator and master and then goes on to live a life the purpose of which is to seek His pleasure. To do only this much, human reason alone would have been sufficient. But, Allah Ta'ālā did not leave it simply at that. In fact, He sent His special people called: نَذِیْر (*nadhir*) to help them reason it out. This word is usually translated as 'one who warns' or 'warner' in English (the later, though, not formally admissible in the language, but is still used in the absence of a suitable equivalent). In fact, a nadhir is a person who, by virtue of his mercy and compassion, asks his people to stay away from things that are likely to bring harm to them or cause their total ruination as a people and tries to instill the fear of such things in their hearts, lest it actually happens. In terms of its well-recognized meaning, it refers to the noble prophets علیهما السلام, and to the 'Ulama' who carry out their mission as their deputies. The outcome of the verse is: 'We gave them reason to recognize the true from the false. Along with it, We also sent Our prophets who would guide them on the path of truth and keep them safe from the false.'

And it has been reported from Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ, 'Ikrimah ﷺ and Imām Ja'far Bāqir that *nadhir* means the gray hair of the old age. When they flare up, they give a message to human beings: Here comes the time to go! This statement too is not contradictory to the first one for gray hair might as well serve as the standard bearers of warning along with Anbiya' and 'Ulama'.

And the truth of the matter is that all conditions faced by human

beings after their age of puberty and all minor and major changes that take place in their persons and in that they are surrounded with are, all of them, heralds of warning for human beings.

Verse 38 - 41

إِنَّ اللّٰهَ عٰلِمُ غَيْبِ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ ؕ اِنَّهٗ عَلِيْمٌۢ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُوْرِ
﴿٣٨﴾ هُوَالَّذِىْ جَعَلَكُمْ خَلٰٓئِفَ فِى الْاَرْضِ ؕ فَمَنْ كَفَرَ فَعَلَيْهِ
كُفْرُهٗ ؕ وَلَا يَزِيْدُ الْكٰفِرِيْنَ كُفْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ اِلَّا مَقْتًا ۚ وَلَا يَزِيْدُ
الْكٰفِرِيْنَ كُفْرُهُمْ اِلَّا خَسَارًا ﴿٣٩﴾ قُلْ اَرَءَيْتُمْ شُرَكَآءَكُمُ الَّذِيْنَ
تَدْعُوْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ ؕ اَرُوْنِىْ مَاذَا خَلَقُوْا مِنَ الْاَرْضِ اَمْ لَهُمْ شِرْكٌ
فِى السَّمٰوٰتِ ۚ اَمْ اٰتَيْنٰهُمْ كِتٰبًا فَهُمْ عَلٰى بَيِّنَتٍ مِّنْهُ ۚ بَلْ اِنْ يَّعِدُ
الظّٰلِمُوْنَ بَعْضُهُمْ بَعْضًا اِلَّا غُرُوْرًا ﴿٤٠﴾ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ يُمْسِكُ السَّمٰوٰتِ
وَالْاَرْضَ اَنْ تَزُوْلَا ۚ وَلَئِنْ زَالَتَآ اِنْ اَمْسَكَهُمَا مِنْ اَحَدٍ مِّنْۢ بَعْدِهٖ ؕ
اِنَّهٗ كَانَ حَلِيْمًا غَفُوْرًا ﴿٤١﴾

Surely Allah is the Knower of the unseen in the heavens and the earth. Indeed He fully knows what lies in the hearts. [38]

He is the One who has made you successors (of the past generations) in the earth. So the one who becomes infidel, his infidelity will go against himself. And their infidelity adds nothing to the infidels but anger with their Lord, and their infidelity adds nothing to the infidels but loss. [39] **Say, "Tell me about your (presumed) co-gods whom you invoke beside Allah. Show me that part of the earth that they have created, or do they have a share in the (creation) of the heavens? " Or have We given them a book so that they are upon a clear proof from it? No, but the wrongdoers promise one another nothing but delusion.** [40] **Undoubtedly, Allah holds back the heavens and the earth from leaving their existing state, and if they were to leave, there is none who can hold them back, except Him. Surely He is Forbearing, Most-Forgiving.** [41]

Commentary

The word: خلائف (*khala'if*) in verse 39: هُوَالَّذِىْ جَعَلَكُمْ خَلٰٓئِفَ فِى الْاَرْضِ (He is the One who has made you successors (of the past generations) in the earth.) is the plural of: خَلِيْفَة (*khalifah*) which means deputy or vice-regent. The general sense is that Allah Ta'ālā has let human beings have lands and houses that keep passing on from one to the other. In this phenomena, there is a great lesson - turn to Allah. Then, the statement could also be taken to have been addressed to the ummah of the Holy Prophet ﷺ saying, 'After past communities, We made you take their place with authority to make life better around you, so it is your duty that you learn your lesson from what happened to people earlier than you, and hence you, on your part, do not while away precious moments of your life in negligence.'

In the expression: اِنَّ اللّٰهَ يُمْسِكُ السَّمٰوٰتِ (Undoubtedly, Allah holds back the heavens and the earth - 35:41), the 'holding' of the heavens or the skies does not mean that their movement was stopped. Instead, it means holding them from moving askance - as the word: اَنْ تَزُوْلَا (*an tazula*: from leaving their existing state,) bears it out. Therefore, in this verse, there exists no supporting evidence on either side as to the skies move or they are static.

Verses 42 - 45

وَاَقْسَمُوْا بِاللّٰهِ جَهْدَ اَيْمَانِهِمْ لَئِنْ جَآءَهُمْ نَذِيْرٌ لَّيَكُوْنُنَّ اَهْدٰى مِنْ
اِحْدَى الْاُمَمِ ۚ فَلَمَّا جَآءَهُمْ نَذِيْرٌ مَّا زَادَهُمْ اِلَّا نُفُوْرَا ﴿٤٢﴾ اِسْتِكْبَارًا
فِى الْاَرْضِ وَمَكْرَ السَّيِّئِ ۗ وَلَا يَحِيْقُ الْمَكْرُ السَّيِّئُ اِلَّا بِاَهْلِهٖ ۗ
فَهَلْ يَنْظُرُوْنَ اِلَّا سُنَّتَ الْاَوَّلِيْنَ ۚ فَلَنْ تَجِدَ لِسُنَّتِ اللّٰهِ تَبْدِيْلًا ۚ
وَلَنْ تَجِدَ لِسُنَّتِ اللّٰهِ تَحْوِيْلًا ﴿٤٣﴾ اَوَلَمْ يَسِيْرُوْا فِى الْاَرْضِ
فَيَنْظُرُوْا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ وَكَانُوْٓا اَشَدَّ مِنْهُمْ قُوَّةً ۗ
وَمَا كَانَ اللّٰهُ لِيُعْجِزَهٗ مِنْ شَىْءٍ فِى السَّمٰوٰتِ وَلَا فِى الْاَرْضِ ۗ اِنَّهٗ
كَانَ عَلِيْمًا قَدِيْرًا ﴿٤٤﴾ وَلَوْ يُؤَاخِذُ اللّٰهُ النَّاسَ بِمَا كَسَبُوْا مَا تَرَكَ

عَلٰى ظَهْرِهَا مِنْ دَآبَّةٍ وَّلٰكِنْ يُّؤَخِّرُهُمْ اِلٰٓى اَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى ۚ فَاِذَا جَآءَ
اَجَلُهُمْ فَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ كَانَ بِعِبَادِهٖ بَصِيْرًا ﴿٤٥﴾

And they had sworn forceful oaths that if a warner would come to them, they would be more receptive to guidance than any other community. But when a warner came to them, it added nothing to them but aversion, [42] because of their showing arrogance in the land and plotting of evil. And the evil plot envelops none but its own people (who make it). So, they are looking for nothing but the (divine) practice with the earlier people. So you will never find in Allah's practice any change, and you will never find in Allah's practice any diversion. [43] Did they not travel in the land and see how was the end of those before them ? And they were stronger than these in power. And Allah is not such that something in the heavens or the earth can frustrate Him. Surely He is All-Knowing, All-Powerful. [44] And if Allah were to take mankind to task for what they did, He would have not left a living creature on its back, but He delays them upto an appointed time. So when their time will come, then Allah is the One who will see His slaves. [45]

Commentary

The word: لَايَحِيْقُ (*lā yaḥīq*) in verse 43: وَلَا يَحِيْقُ الْمَكْرُ السَّيِّئُ اِلَّا بِاَهْلِهٖ (And the evil plot envelops none but its own people (who make it) carries the sense of: لَايُحِيْطُ (*lā yuḥīṭ*: does not surround) or: لَايُصِيْبُ (*lā uṣīb*: does not afflict). Thus, it comes to mean that the curse of making an evil plan falls on none but the one who makes it. In other words, a person who wishes evil for others, he himself falls a victim to it.

A doubt may arise at this point. It is commonly seen in this worldly life that someone with an evil plan gets away with it and the loss intended for anyone stands inflicted on him. The answer to this has been given by Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanavi by saying that the pain or loss inflicted on such a person was a loss limited to this mortal world, while the loss to be the fate of the maker of such evil plan in the Hereafter was not only heavier, but was more lasting too. So, if compared, his worldly loss amounts to nothing.

There is another answer given by some elders who say that there are

occasions when the curse of contriving against someone innocent or inflicting injustice on him, more than often, falls on the person causing it, right here in this world as well. Muḥammad Ibn Ka'b al-Qurazi said: There are three things the doer of which does not remain safe against its curse and punishment even in this world. These are: (1) Causing harm or pain to some innocent person by engineering evil against him. (2) Inflicting any injustice. (3) Breaking of pledge. (Ibn Kathīr) Particularly so, when things like that are done against a person who is helpless or does not have the power to avenge or elects to endure despite having that power. Experience bears out that no one who does things like that has ever remained unaffected by the curse of injustice thus inflicted even in this world. Hence, the outcome will be that the element of restriction (Ḥasr) visible here appears in terms of a majority rule and not in any absolute sense. Allah knows best.

Alhamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Faṭir
Ends here

Sūrah Yā Sīn

Sūrah Yā Sīn was revealed at Makkī and it has 83 verses and 5 sections

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 12

يٰسٓ ﴿١﴾ وَالْقُرْاٰنِ الْحَكِيْمِ ﴿٢﴾ اِنَّكَ لَمِنَ الْمُرْسَلِيْنَ ﴿٣﴾ عَلٰى
صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيْمٍ ﴿٤﴾ تَنْزِيْلَ الْعَزِيْزِ الرَّحِيْمِ ﴿٥﴾ لِتُنْذِرَ قَوْمًا مَّآ اُنْذِرَ
اٰبَآؤُهُمْ فَهُمْ غٰفِلُوْنَ ﴿٦﴾ لَقَدْ حَقَّ الْقَوْلُ عَلٰٓى اَكْثَرِهِمْ فَهُمْ
لَا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿٧﴾ اِنَّا جَعَلْنَا فِيْٓ اَعْنَاقِهِمْ اَغْلٰلًا فَهِيَ اِلَى الْاَذْقَانِ فَهُمْ
مُّقْمَحُوْنَ ﴿٨﴾ وَجَعَلْنَا مِنْۢ بَيْنِ اَيْدِيْهِمْ سَدًّا وَّمِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ سَدًّا
فَاَغْشَيْنٰهُمْ فَهُمْ لَا يُبْصِرُوْنَ ﴿٩﴾ وَسَوَآءٌ عَلَيْهِمْ ءَاَنْذَرْتَهُمْ اَمْ لَمْ
تُنْذِرْهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿١٠﴾ اِنَّمَا تُنْذِرُ مَنِ اتَّبَعَ الذِّكْرَ وَخَشِيَ
الرَّحْمٰنَ بِالْغَيْبِ ۚ فَبَشِّرْهُ بِمَغْفِرَةٍ وَّاَجْرٍ كَرِيْمٍ ﴿١١﴾ اِنَّا نَحْنُ نُحْيِ
الْمَوْتٰى وَنَكْتُبُ مَا قَدَّمُوْا وَاٰثَارَهُمْ ۗ وَكُلَّ شَيْءٍ اَحْصَيْنٰهُ فِيْٓ اِمَامٍ
مُّبِيْنٍ ﴿١٢﴾

Yā Sīn [1] By the Qur'ān, that is full of wisdom, [2] You are truly one of the messengers, [3] on a straight path

1. Today, when I am beginning the *Tafsir* of Sūrah Yā Sīn, this is the ninth day of the month of Ṣafar. On the same day in the Hijrah year 1355, my respected father, Maulānā Muḥammad Yāsīn, may Allah have mercy on him, had died. His association with the name of this Sūrah and the date of his death revived fond memories of him. Generous readers are requested to pray for the forgiveness of this humble writer and his parents, and should someone have the heart to recite Sūrah Yā Sīn and pray for the transmittal of its *thawāb* to them, then, *Subḥānallah,* it wll be so nice of them. - the author.

[4], (this Qur'ān being) a revelation from the All-Mighty, the Very-Merciful, [5] so that you may warn a people whose fathers were not warned, and hence, they are unaware. [6] The word has indeed come true about most of them, so they will not believe. [7] Surely We have placed iron collars on their necks, so they are reaching upto their chins, and their heads are forced to remain upraised. [8] And We have placed a barrier in front of them and a barrier behind them, and (thus) they are encircled by Us ; so they do not see. [9] And it is all equal for them whether you warn them or do not warn them, they will not believe. [10] You can (usefully) warn only the one who follows the advice and fears the Raḥmān (the All-Merciful) unseen. So give him the good news of forgiveness and of a noble reward. [11] Surely We will give new life to the dead, and We are recording whatever (deeds) they send ahead and whatever effects they leave behind. And every thing is fully computed by Us in a manifest source-book. [12]

Commentary

The Merits of Sūrah Yā Sīn

Sayyidnā Ma'qil Ibn Yasār ﷺ narrates that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said: يٰسٓ قَلْبُ الْقُرْآنِ (Sūrah Yā Sīn is the heart of the Qur'ān) and some words of this Ḥadīth tell us that a person who recites Sūrah Yā Sīn exclusively for the sake of Allah and the 'Akhirah is forgiven, and that it should be recited over the dead among us (reported by Aḥmad and Abū Dāwūd and an-Nasā'ī and Ibn Ḥibbān and al-Ḥakim and others - as in Rūḥ-ul- Ma'ānī and al-Maẓharī).

Imām al-Ghazzālī said that one reason for calling Sūrah Yā Sīn the heart of the Qur'ān could be that, in this Sūrah, themes relating to the Day of Judgment and the Resurrection have appeared with particular details and eloquent presentation. Then, out of the principles of faith, there is the belief in the Hereafter, something on which depends the soundness of human deeds. The fear of the Hereafter makes one ready for good deeds and this is what stops one from indulging in desires that are impermissible and things that are unlawful. So, the way soundness of the body depends on the soundness of the heart, similarly the soundness of the faith ('Imān) depends on the concern for the Hereafter (Rūḥ). And the way Yā Sīn is a well recognized name of this Sūrah, it is named in a Ḥadīth also as 'Aẓīmah (reported by Abū Naṣr as-Sajazī from Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah

رضى الله عنها). And according to another Ḥadīth the name of this Sūrah has appeared in Torah as مُعِمَّة (*Mu'immah*), that is, a Sūrah that universalizes its blessings in worldly life and in the Hereafter for its readers, and the name of its reader has been given as Ash-Sharīf, and it was said that his intercession on the Day of Judgment will be accepted for a number of people that would exceed the number of people in the tribe of Rabi'ah (reported by Sa'īd Ibn Manṣur and al-Baihaqī from Ḥassan Ibn 'Atiyyah) and in some narrations, its name has also been cited as: مُدَافِعَة.. (*mudāfi'ah*) that is, it removes misfortunes from its readers, while some others mention it by the name قَاضِيَة (Qāḍiyah) that is, the caretaker of needs (Rūḥ-ul- Ma'ānī).

And narration of Sayyidnā Abū Dharr al-Ghifārī ﷺ says: The reciting of Sūrah Yā Sīn near a dying person makes the ordeal of death easy on him (reported by ad-Dailami and Ibn Hibban - Maẓharī).

And Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Zubayr ﷺ said: Whoever puts Sūrah Yā Sīn ahead of his need, his need is fulfilled (reported by al-Mahamili in his 'Amali - Maẓharī)

And Yaḥyā Ibn Kathīr said: Whoever recites Sūrah Yā Sīn in the morning will remain happy until evening and whoever recites it in the evening will be happy until morning and he said that this thing was confided to him by a person who had experienced it (reported by Ibn al-Faris - Maẓharī).

Yā Sīn (يٰسٓ): According to the well-known position concerning this word, it is one of the 'isolated letters' (*al-ḥurūf-ul-muqaṭṭa'āt*) the knowledge of which rests with Allah alone. Hower, Ibn-ul- 'Arabi has reported that Imām Mālik has said that it is one of the names of Allah. And a narration from Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ also says that it is one of the Divine Names. And according to another narration, this is a word from the Ethiopian language that means: 'O human person' and denotes the person of the noble Prophet ﷺ. And, it is gathered from a saying of Sayyidnā Ibn Jubayr ﷺ that the word: Yā Sīn is the name of the noble Prophet ﷺ. It appears in Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī that giving the Holy Prophet ﷺ a name composed of these two elegant letters - Yā and Sīn - has great secrets behind it.

About Giving someone the name: يٰسٓ (Yā Sīn: written as Yāsīn):

Imām Mālik does not like to name a person as Yāsīn for the reason that, according to him, it is one of the Divine Names and its exact meaning remains unknown. Therefore, it is possible that it may have some meaning that is exclusive to Allah Ta'ālā, and nobody is allowed to have that name, for example: اَلْخَالِقُ (*al-khāliq*: The Creator), رَازِق (*ar-rāziq*: The Provider-Sustainer) and other names of this nature. Still, if this word is written with a script that reads: يٰسٓ (Yasin), it is permissible to give that name to a human being, because the Qur'ān says: سَلَامٌ عَلٰى اٰل يٰسِيْنَ (Peace on Ilyāsīn or Āl Yāsīn) (Ibn al-'Arabi). The well recognized rendering (*qira'ah*) of this verse is: اِلْيَاسِيْنَ (ilyasin) but, in some renderings, it also appears as: اٰل يَاسِيْنَ (āl-yāsīn).

The word: آباء (fathers) in verse 6: لِتُنْذِرَ قَوْمًا مَّآ اُنْذِرَ اٰبَآؤُهُمْ (so that you may warn a people whose fathers were not warned) means the Arabs. The sense is that no warner, that is, a prophet, has come to their ancestors since a long time, the reference being to the ones nearer among them. Since the coming of their patriarch, Sayyidnā Ibrahim عليه السلام and with him, Sayyidnā Ismā'īl عليه السلام, no prophet had appeared among the Arabs for several centuries, even though, the work of calling people to the true faith with warnings and glad tidings kept going on as mentioned in the verse of the Qur'ān: وَاِنْ مِّنْ اُمَّةٍ اِلَّا خَلَا فِيْهَا نَذِيْرٌ (and there was no community without a warner having passed among them - 35:24) also confirms the same truth - that Divine mercy has never kept any nation or community deprived of the essential call and warning at any time and in any region. But, it is obvious that teachings of prophets when communicated by their deputies do not bring about the same effect as it is witnessed when the prophets do it in person. Therefore, in the present verse, it was said about the Arabs that no warner came to them. As a fall out of this situation, there was no regular system of education in Arabia where people could learn and teach which was why they came to be called: اُمِّيِّيْنَ (*ummiyyun*: the unlettered ones).

Verses 7 and 8: لَقَدْ حَقَّ الْقَوْلُ عَلٰٓى اَكْثَرِهِمْ فَهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ اِنَّا جَعَلْنَا فِيْٓ اَعْنَاقِهِمْ اَغْلٰلًا (The word has indeed come true about most of them, so they will not believe. Surely We have placed iron collars on their necks, so they are reaching up to their chins, and their heads are forced to remain upraised.) mean that Allah Ta'ālā has already placed before human beings two alternate ways

of life - the way of kufr (disbelief) and 'Imān (faith) and the way of Jannah (Paradise) and Jahannam (the Hell) - and to give direction and substance to this call of faith, He also sent prophets and Books. In fact, He went further ahead by giving human beings the choice to first identify what is good or bad for one and then take to either of the two ways. Now if there is that unfortunate person who does neither think, nor ponders over proofs spread throughout nature, nor listens to the call of the prophets, nor deliberates in the Book of Allah, then, once this person has made a choice and has taken to a way thus chosen, Allah Ta'ālā assembles for him everything he needs to achieve that end. One who embraces the wont of disbelief, for him the supply of things and circumstances that would increase his disbelief never run short. This is what has been expressed as: لَقَدْ حَقَّ الْقَوْلُ عَلٰى اَكْثَرِهِمْ فَهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ (7) which means that against most of these people, because of their choice of the evil, the decisive verdict of Allah - that they are not going to believe - already stands pronounced.

Given next is a similitude of their condition by saying that they look like people whose necks have been shackled in a manner that causes their faces and eyes stay upraised rendering them totally unable to see their way on the ground. If so, it is obvious that one cannot remain safe against the likelihood of falling down into some ditch or abyss.

Then comes another similitude. It was said that it is like a wall having been placed as a barrier all around someone. Thus surrounded, this person becomes unaware of what is going on outside. Similarly, these infidels are surrounded by their ignorance and, on top of it, by their hostility and doggedness. Under these conditions, it is as if the truth present elsewhere simply does not reach them.

Imām Rāzī has said that there are two kinds of barriers against perception. One barrier is of the kind that prevents one from seeing even himself. The second barrier is the inability to see one's surrounding. For the disbelievers, both kinds of barriers against seeing the truth were present. Therefore, the first example is that of the first barrier, that is, one who cannot bend his neck to lower his eyes cannot see even his own self or the state in which he exists. Then the second example is that of the second barrier that stops one from seeing his surrounding. (Rūḥ-ul- Ma'ānī)

The majority of commentators have declared the present verse to be a similitude of their disbelief and hostility only. And some commentators, on the basis of some narrations, have taken it to be the description of an event, that is, Abū Jahl and some others, bent on killing or hurting the Holy Prophet ﷺ, lunged towards him but Allah Ta'ālā cast curtain over their eyes. Thus, rendered helpless, they went back. Many similar events have been reported in books of Tafsir, such as, Ibn Kathīr, Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī, al-Qurṭubī, Maẓharī and others. But, most of these are weak narrations. The Tafsir of the verse cannot be based on such sources.

In verse 12, by saying: وَنَكْتُبُ مَا قَدَّمُوْا وَآثَارَهُمْ (and We are recording whatever (deeds) they send ahead and whatever effects they leave behind.), the doing of deeds has been equated with 'sending ahead' to point out that good or bad deeds done in the mortal world have not gone the way of all flesh right here. Instead of that, these were their wherewithal, their baggage that has gone ahead of them to their destination in the next world that they have to confront. Now, if these deeds were good, they will make them look handsome in Paradise, and if they were bad, the embers of Hell will be their fate. The real purpose of 'recording' these deeds is to keep them preserved. Writing too is a means of doing that, so that there remain no probability of error, forgetfulness, increase or decrease.

The effects of deeds are also recorded like the deeds themselves

The terse statement: وَآثَارَهُمْ (*wa 'atharahum*: and their effects) in Verse 12 means that the way deeds done by them are written, so are their effects too. The word: آثار (*'āthār*: traces, or effects) denotes fruits, outcomes and consequences that show up later and keep surviving. For example, someone helped people learn their religion, told them about its injunctions or wrote a book for to enable them to get the best out of their faith, or instituted some sort of endowment that turned out to be beneficial for people after him and, for that matter, did something that brought benefit to common Muslims, then, as far as the effects of this good deed remain, and as long as they bring fruits, they all will continue to be written in his Book of Deeds. Similar is the case of bad deeds, the evil fruits and effects of which continue to remain in the world. For example, someone instituted oppressive laws, or institutions that tend to corrupt the human deeds and morals, or made people follow the way of

error and evil, then, as far as and as long as the evil outcomes of his deed keep taking shape, these will continue to be recorded in his Book of Deeds - as it has been said by the Holy Prophet ﷺ himself while explaining this verse. Narrates Sayyidnā Jarir Ibn 'Abdullāh al-Bajali رضي الله عنه that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said:

> مَنْ سَنَّ سُنَّةً حَسَنَةً فَلَهُ أَجْرُهَا وَأَجْرُ مَنْ عَمِلَ بِهَا مِنْ بَعْدِهِ مِنْ غَيْرِ أَنْ يُنْقَصَ مِنْ أُجُوْرِهِمْ شَيْئاً وَمَنْ سَنَّ سُنَّةً سَيِّئَةً كَانَ عَلَيْهِ وِزْرُهَا وَ وِزْرُمَنْ عَمِلَ بِهَا مِنْ بَعْدِهِ لَا يُنْقَصُ مِنْ أَوْزَارِهِمْ شَيْئًا، ثُمَّ تَلَا وَنَكْتُبُ مَا قَدَّمُوْا وَآثَارَهُمْ، (ابن كثير عن ابن ابى حاتم)
>
> "Whoever started a good practice, he will have its reward, and the reward of whoever acts in accordance with it after him, without the least decrease in the reward of others acting upon it. And whoever started a bad practice, on him shall be its sin along with the sin of whoever acts in accordance with it after him, without the least decrease in the sins of others acting upon it" - Ibn Kathīr from Ibn Abī Ḥatim.

The word: آثار (*'āthār*: traces or effects) is also used in the sense of footprints. As in Ḥadīth, when one walks to the Masjid, one good deed is recorded at every step he takes. Some Ḥadīth narrations seem to indicate that the word: آثار (*'āthār*: traces) appearing in this verse refers to these very footprints. The way the reward of Ṣalāh is written down, similarly, on every step taken while going for Ṣalāh, one good deed is recorded. At this stage in his Tafsīr, Ibn Kathīr has put together all narrations that mention that there were many people in Madīnah whose homes were at some distance from the Prophet's Masjid. They thought of setting up their homes closer to the Masjid. The Holy Prophet ﷺ told them not to do that. He advised them: Live where you do. When you walk in from afar, do not take this time to have been wasted. The more your steps, the more shall be your reward.

There could be a possible doubt here in that the present Sūrah is Makkī, while the event mentioned in these Ḥadīth belongs to Madīnah. This could be answered by saying that the verse might as well be in its general sense - that is, the traces of deeds are also written - and that this verse may have been revealed in Makkah. But thereafter, when this event came to pass in Madīnah, he mentioned this verse in support. Then he counted footprints too within the effects and traces the writing of which has been mentioned in this verse of the Qur'ān. This way the

apparent contradiction between these two explanations also stands removed (as explicated and preferred by Ibn Kathīr).

Verses 13 - 32

وَاضْرِبْ لَهُمْ مَّثَلًا اَصْحٰبَ الْقَرْيَةِ ۘ اِذْ جَآءَهَا الْمُرْسَلُوْنَ ﴿١٣﴾ اِذْ
اَرْسَلْنَآ اِلَيْهِمُ اثْنَيْنِ فَكَذَّبُوْهُمَا فَعَزَّزْنَا بِثَالِثٍ فَقَالُوْٓا اِنَّآ اِلَيْكُمْ
مُّرْسَلُوْنَ ﴿١٤﴾ قَالُوْا مَآ اَنْتُمْ اِلَّا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُنَا ۙ وَمَآ اَنْزَلَ الرَّحْمٰنُ مِنْ
شَيْءٍ ۙ اِنْ اَنْتُمْ اِلَّا تَكْذِبُوْنَ ﴿١٥﴾ قَالُوْا رَبُّنَا يَعْلَمُ اِنَّآ اِلَيْكُمْ
لَمُرْسَلُوْنَ ﴿١٦﴾ وَمَا عَلَيْنَآ اِلَّا الْبَلٰغُ الْمُبِيْنُ ﴿١٧﴾ قَالُوْٓا اِنَّا تَطَيَّرْنَا
بِكُمْ ۚ لَئِنْ لَّمْ تَنْتَهُوْا لَنَرْجُمَنَّكُمْ وَلَيَمَسَّنَّكُمْ مِّنَّا عَذَابٌ اَلِيْمٌ ﴿١٨﴾
قَالُوْا طَآئِرُكُمْ مَّعَكُمْ ۗ اَئِنْ ذُكِّرْتُمْ ۗ بَلْ اَنْتُمْ قَوْمٌ مُّسْرِفُوْنَ ﴿١٩﴾
وَجَآءَ مِنْ اَقْصَا الْمَدِيْنَةِ رَجُلٌ يَّسْعٰى قَالَ يٰقَوْمِ اتَّبِعُوا الْمُرْسَلِيْنَ
﴿٢٠﴾ اتَّبِعُوْا مَنْ لَّا يَسْئَلُكُمْ اَجْرًا وَّهُمْ مُّهْتَدُوْنَ ﴿٢١﴾ وَمَا لِيَ لَآ
اَعْبُدُ الَّذِيْ فَطَرَنِيْ وَاِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُوْنَ ﴿٢٢﴾ ءَاَتَّخِذُ مِنْ دُوْنِهٖٓ اٰلِهَةً اِنْ
يُّرِدْنِ الرَّحْمٰنُ بِضُرٍّ لَّا تُغْنِ عَنِّيْ شَفَاعَتُهُمْ شَيْئًا وَّلَا يُنْقِذُوْنِ ﴿٢٣﴾
اِنِّيْٓ اِذًا لَّفِيْ ضَلٰلٍ مُّبِيْنٍ ﴿٢٤﴾ اِنِّيْٓ اٰمَنْتُ بِرَبِّكُمْ فَاسْمَعُوْنِ ﴿٢٥﴾
قِيْلَ ادْخُلِ الْجَنَّةَ ۗ قَالَ يٰلَيْتَ قَوْمِيْ يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٢٦﴾ بِمَا غَفَرَ لِيْ رَبِّيْ
وَجَعَلَنِيْ مِنَ الْمُكْرَمِيْنَ ﴿٢٧﴾ وَمَآ اَنْزَلْنَا عَلٰى قَوْمِهٖ مِنْۢ بَعْدِهٖ مِنْ
جُنْدٍ مِّنَ السَّمَآءِ وَمَا كُنَّا مُنْزِلِيْنَ ﴿٢٨﴾ اِنْ كَانَتْ اِلَّا صَيْحَةً
وَّاحِدَةً فَاِذَا هُمْ خٰمِدُوْنَ ﴿٢٩﴾ يٰحَسْرَةً عَلَى الْعِبَادِ ۚ مَا يَاْتِيْهِمْ مِّنْ
رَّسُوْلٍ اِلَّا كَانُوْا بِهٖ يَسْتَهْزِءُوْنَ ﴿٣٠﴾ اَلَمْ يَرَوْا كَمْ اَهْلَكْنَا قَبْلَهُمْ مِّنَ
الْقُرُوْنِ اَنَّهُمْ اِلَيْهِمْ لَا يَرْجِعُوْنَ ﴿٣١﴾ وَاِنْ كُلٌّ لَّمَّا جَمِيْعٌ لَّدَيْنَا
مُحْضَرُوْنَ ﴿٣٢﴾

And cite to them the example of the People of the Town, when the messengers came to it, [13] when We sent to them two (apostles), and they rejected them both, so We supported them with a third one. So they said, "We are sent to you. " [14] They (The people of the Town) said, " You are no more than human beings like us, and the Raḥmān has not sent down any thing. You are but telling a lie." [15] They (the messengers) said," Our Lord knows that we are undoubtedly sent to you. [16] And our obligation is no more than to convey the message clearly." [17] They (the People of the Town) said," We take you as a bad omen for us. If you do not desist, we will certainly stone you, and you will be subjected to a painful punishment from us. [18] They said, "Your bad omen is with yourselves. (Do you take it as bad omen) if you are given a good counsel? Rather, you are a people who cross all limits." [19] And there came a man rushing from the farthest part of the city. He said, " O my people, follow the messengers. [20] Follow those who do not claim any reward from you, and they are on the right path. [21] And what excuse do I have if I do not worship the One who has created me and to whom you will be returned? [22] Shall I adopt those gods besides Him that if the Raḥmān intends to do harm to me, their intercession cannot help me in the least, nor can they come to my rescue? [23] In that case, I will be in open error indeed. [24] Undoubtedly I have believed in your Lord; so listen to me." [25] (Thereafter when his people killed him,) it was said to him, " Enter the Paradise". He said," Would that my people knew [26] how my Lord has forgiven me and placed me among the honored ones!" [27] And We did not send down to his people any army from the heavens after him, nor were We (in need) to send down. [28] It was no more than a single Cry, and in no time they were extinguished. [29]

Alas for the slaves (of Allah)! No messenger came to them, but they have been mocking at him. [30] Did they not see how many generations We have destroyed before them who will not come back to them? [31] And all of them are but to be assembled together (and) to be arraigned before Us. [32]

Commentary

The expression: ضرب مثل (cite an example) in verse 13: وَاضْرِبْ لَهُمْ مَّثَلًا اَصْحٰبَ الْقَرْيَةِ (And cite to them the example of the People of the Town) is generally

used to prove something by giving the example of a similar thing. The following event has been narrated by the Holy Qur'ān to alert people against disbelievers who rejected the very notion of there being a prophet or messenger.

The town in which this event took place

The Qur'ān does not tell us the name of this town. In historical narrations, Muḥammad Ibn Isḥāq has reported from Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ, Ka'b Aḥbār and Wahb Ibn Munabbih that it was the town of Anṭākiyah (Antioch) and majority of commentators have opted for it. Abū Ḥayyān and Ibn Kathīr have said that no statement counter to it has been reported from any of the commentators. According to details given in Mu'jim-ul-Buldān, Anṭākiyah is a well-known town of Syria, famous for its verdant growth and stability. Its fort and its protective wall around the town are considered ideal. The town has many churches with inlay work in gold and silver. This is a coastal town. During the Islamic period, it was conquered by the famous Ṣaḥābi Sayyidnā Abū 'Ubaidah Ibn Jarrāḥ ﷺ. Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī, the author of Mu'jim-ul-Buldān has also written that the grave of Ḥabīb Najjār (whose story appears a little later in this verse) is a known site in Anṭākiyah. People from far and near come to visit it. From this clear statement from him also, it seems likely that the town mentioned in this verse is this very town of Anṭākiyah.

Ibn Kathīr has written that Anṭākiyah is one of the four major towns which have been deemed to be the centers of the Christian faith, that is, al-Quds, (Jerusalem), Rumiyyah (Rome), Iskandariyyah (Alexandria) and Anṭākiyah (Antioch). And he also said that Anṭākiyah is the first city that embraced the faith brought by Sayyidnā 'Īsā al-Masīḥ عليه السلام. It is on this very ground that Ibn Kathīr is reluctant in accepting that the town mentioned in this verse could be the famous town of Anṭākiyah - because, according to the explicit statement of the Qur'ān, this was a town of disbelievers who refused to accept any prophet or messenger. And according to historical accounts, they were idolaters and polytheists. If so, how can Anṭākiyah, that was foremost in welcoming and embracing the faith of Sayyidnā 'Īsā al-Masīḥ عليه السلام, be the town referred to here?

In addition to that, it is also proved from the cited verses of the Qur'ān that this whole town was hit by a punishment that left no one alive. No such event about the town of Anṭākiyah - that all its inhabitants had

simultaneously died at some time - has been reported in history. Therefore, according to Ibn Kathīr, either the town mentioned in this verse is some town other than Anṭākiyah, or that it is some other town bearing the same name of Anṭākiyah which is not the famous town of Anṭākiyah.

Though, the author of Fatḥ-ul-Mannan has also given answers to the doubts expressed by Ibn Kathīr, however, the easiest way out has been offered by Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānavī in Tafsīr Bayān-ul-Qur'ān. To understand the subject of these verses of the Qur'ān, he says, it is not necessary to determine the location of this town, and since the noble Qur'ān has kept it ambiguous, there is just no need to exert so much effort to determine it. The famous saying of the early forbears of Islam that: اَبْهِمُوْا مَا اَبْهَمَهُ اللهُ (Leave ambiguous that which Allah has left ambiguous) also requires nothing but this.

In the next sentence of verse 13: اِذْجَآءَهَا الْمُرْسَلُوْنَ اِذْ اَرْسَلْنَآ اِلَيْهِمُ اثْنَيْنِ فَكَذَّبُوْهُمَا فَعَزَّزْنَا بِثَالِثٍ فَقَالُوْٓا اِنَّآ اِلَيْكُمْ مُّرْسَلُوْنَ (when the messengers came to it... - 13). The text has briefly mentioned the coming of messengers to the town. The number of the messengers sent has been identified in verse 14: اِذْجَآءَ هَا اِنَّآ اِلَيْكُمْ مُّرْسَلُوْنَ (when We sent to them two (apostles), and they rejected them both, so We supported them with a third one. So they said, "We are sent to you".) This shows that three messengers were sent to the said town. First came two, the people of the town rejected them and refused to listen to them. Then Allah Ta'ālā strengthened them by sending the third messenger. After that, all three addressed the people of the town, telling them that they had been sent to guide them to the straight path.

What does 'messenger' mean? Who were these people?

In the Qur'ān, the word: رسول (rasul: messenger) and: مرسل (mursal: sent) is generally used for a prophet or apostle of Allah. In this verse, Allah Ta'ālā has attributed their sending to Himself. This too indicates that they are prophets who have been sent to accomplish some mission. This is what Ibn Isḥāq reports from Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ, Ka'b Aḥbār ﷺ and Wahb Ibn Munabbih. According to the reports, these three elders mentioned as the ones sent to this town were the prophets of Allah. Their names as given in this narration are Ṣādiq, Ṣadūq and Shalūm, while in another narration, the name of the third appears as Sham'ūn. (Ibn Kathīr)

And it has been reported from Sayyidnā Qatādah ﷺ that the word: مُرْسَلُوْنَ (*mursalūn*: sent ones) has not been used here in its technical sense, instead, it appears in the sense of a bearer of message, and the three elders who were sent to this town were no prophets themselves, rather, were from among the disciples of Sayyidnā 'Īsā عليه السلام and were sent for the guidance of this town under his order (Ibn Kathīr). And since their sender, Sayyidnā 'Īsā عليه السلام was a messenger of Allah, therefore, in a way, his sending was indirectly the sending of Allah Ta'ālā. Hence, his sending has been attributed to Allah Ta'ālā. Out of the commentators, Ibn Kathīr has opted for the first saying while al-Qurṭubī and others have gone by the second. From the apparent sense of the text of the Qur'ān too, it is generally gathered that these blessed souls were prophets of Allah. Allah knows best.

The word: تَطَيُّر (*taṭayyur*) in verse 18: قَالُوْٓا اِنَّا تَطَيَّرْنَابِكُمْ (We take you as a bad omen for us.) means the seeing of an evil omen in someone or taking someone to be wretched. It is being said here that the people of this town did not listen to these blessed souls sent to them and chided them as being wretched or carriers of misfortune. It appears in some narrations that a famine had overtaken this town, because the people of the town had curtly turned down the good counsel of the messengers. That is why the people of the town called them wretched, or may be they were hurt in some other way. So, as is the common habit of disbelievers, they would hasten to attribute any distress that afflicts them to prophets and the righteous who are nothing but their guides and benefactors. Hence, in this case too, they lost no time and attributed their own wretchedness to these blessed elders. This happens to be similar to what has been said in the Qur'ān about the people of Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام: فَاِذَا جَآءَتْهُمُ الْحَسَنَةُ قَالُوْا لَنَا هٰذِهٖ وَاِنْ تُصِبْهُمْ سَيِّئَةٌ يَّطَّيَّرُوْا بِمُوْسٰى وَمَنْ مَّعَهٗ (So when something good come to them they said, "This is our right". And if they suffered from something evil, they ascribed it as an ill omen to Mūsā and those with him - 7:131). Similarly, the people of Sayyidnā Ṣāliḥ عليه السلام said to him: تَطَيَّرْنَا بِكَ وَبِمَنْ مَّعَكَ (They said, "we regard you and those with you as a sign of bad omen". - 27:47).

The sense of the statement: قَالُوْا طَآئِرُكُمْ مَّعَكُمْ (They said, "Your bad omen is with yourselves - 19) is that misfortune is an outcome of your own

deeds.' The word: طَائِر (*ṭa'ir*) essentially denotes bad omen or misfortune and, on occasions, it is also used to refer to the effects of misfortune, that is, wretchedness. Here, this is what it means. (Ibn Kathīr, Qurṭubī)

In verse 20, it was said: وَجَآءَ مِنْ أَقْصَى الْمَدِيْنَةِ رَجُلٌ يَّسْعٰى (And there came a man rushing from the farthest part of the city.) In the first verse (13), the place where this incident transpired was expressed as: اَلْقَرْيَة (al-qaryah: town) which, according to the Arabic lexical usage, does not signify a small village, instead, it means a habitation in the absolute sense. It may be a small habitation or a big city. Now, in this verse, this place has been identified as: الْمَدِيْنَة (al-madīnah), a name used only for a big city . From here, we learn that the habitation where this event took place was some big city. Hence, this too supports the saying where it has been identified as Anṭākiyah. The expression: أَقْصَى الْمَدِيْنَة (*aqṣal-madīnah*: farthest part of the city) means outskirts of the city. The word: يَّسْعٰى (*yas'ā*: rushing) in the phrase: رَجُلٌ يَّسْعٰى has been derived from: يَسْعٰى، سَعٰى (run) which means to walk in a running gait. Therefore, the expression would mean that a man came running from the farthest part of the city. Then, there are occasions when this word is also used in the sense of walking with concern, poise and sense of purpose to be accomplished - which may not include running - as in Sūrah Al-Jumu'ah: فَاسْعَوْا اِلٰى ذِكْرِ اللّٰهِ (*fas 'aw ilā dhikril-lāh*: hasten for the remembrance of Allah (Khuṭbah and Ṣalāh of Jumu'ah) - 62:9). Here, this very sense is intended.

The event relating to the person coming from the farthest part of the city

The noble Qur'ān has left this too as ambiguous. It does not mention his name, nor does it say who he was. As part of historical narrations, Ibn Ishaq has reported from Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās, Ka'b al-Aḥbār And Wahb Ibn Munabbih that the name of this person was Ḥabīb. There are different sayings about his profession. The most famous is the one that says that he was a carpenter. (Ibn Kathīr).

Other historical narrations reported by commentators at this stage tell us that this person too was initially an idolater. He happened to meet the two messengers who came to this town the first time. It was either as a result of their teachings or, as it appears in some narrations, by seeing extraordinary working of wonders at their hands, his heart was lit with faith. He repented from past idolatry, embraced Islam and retired to a

cave devoting to worship. When he got the news that the people of the city have rejected the teachings of these messengers, have become hostile to them and were threatening to kill them, he came to his people prompted by the mixed objectives of his concern for their good as well as the safety of the messengers. He advised them to follow these messengers and declared that he himself had become a believer: اِنِّیۡۤ اٰمَنۡتُ بِرَبِّکُمۡ فَاسۡمَعُوۡنِ (I have believed in your Lord; so listen to me.- 25). The addressee here could be his own people where calling Allah Ta'ālā their Lord was to express a reality - though, they did not accept it. Then, it could also be that this address is to the messengers and the purpose of saying: فَاسۡمَعُوۡنِ (listen to me) may be that they should hear what he was saying and bear witness before Allah that he was a believer.

Verse 26 states: قِیۡلَ ادۡخُلِ الۡجَنَّۃَ قَالَ یٰلَیۡتَ قَوۡمِیۡ یَعۡلَمُوۡنَ بِمَا غَفَرَلِیۡ رَبِّیۡ وَجَعَلَنِیۡ مِنَ الۡمُکۡرَمِیۡنَ (it was said to him, " Enter the Paradise". He said,"Would that my people knew how my Lord has forgiven me and placed me among the honored ones!" - 26, 27), that is, it was said to the person who had come from the farthest part of the city to prompt people to believe in the messengers, "Enter Paradise."

It is obvious that this address was communicated through some angel who told him to go into the Paradise. In fact, the essential sense of asking him to enter Paradise is to give him the good news that his place in Paradise is a settled matter which would translate into reality at its appointed time after going through the process of Resurrection. (Qurṭubī)

And the possibility that he was shown his place in Paradise at that very point of time is not so remote. In addition to that, there is the post-death and pre-resurrection state known as *barzakh*. In this state of *Barzakh* too, people bound to go to Paradise are treated well with provision of comfort from Paradise. Therefore, the arrival of such people in the state of *Barzakh* is, in a way, virtual entry into Paradise.

By the words, "Enter Paradise" a hint is released to suggest that this person was martyred - because, entering Paradise or being enabled to perceive the traces of Paradise can come about only after death.

In historical narratives, it has been reported from Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās عليه السلام and early Tafsīr authorities, Muqātil and Mujāhid that this person was Ḥabīb Ibn Ismā'īl an-Najjār and he is among people who had

believed in our noble Prophet ﷺ six hundred years before he actually appeared - as it has been reported about the great *tubba'* (line of kings in Yemen) that he had come to believe in him much before he was born by reading the prophesies of his coming given in past scriptures. The third respected elder who believed in him before he was ordained and gave his call as prophet is Waraqah Ibn Nawfal who has been mentioned in the Ḥadīth of the Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī as part of the events that relate to the initial descent of Waḥy (revelation). This too is a singularity of the Holy Prophet ﷺ that these three persons had believed in him before his birth and ordainment. This did not come to pass in the case of any other messenger or prophet.

According to the report of Wahb Ibn Munabbih, this person was a leper. He lived in a house at the farthest gate of the city. For seventy years, he kept praying to his assumed gods that he be delivered from his ailment. By chance, these messengers entered the city of Anṭākiyah from that very gate. When he met them the first time, they advised him to shun idolatry and invited him to turn to the worship of Allah Ta'ālā for all his needs. He asked them if they had any proof for the correctness of their assertion. When they answered in affirmative, he told them about the disease of leprosy he suffered from and asked them if they could remove it from him. They said, 'We shall pray to our Lord. He will make you healthy.' He said, 'How strange of you to say that. Here I am, praying to my gods for the past seventy years, yet nothing has happened. How can your Lord change my condition in a single day?' They said, 'Our Lord is powerful over everything, while those you have taken as gods have no reality. They can neither bring benefit to anyone nor can they cause loss.' After hearing what they said, this person believed and those blessed souls prayed for him. Allah Ta'ālā blessed him with perfect health, leaving no traces of the disease he suffered from. Now, his faith became firm, and he promised to himself that he would spend the half of what he will earn in a day in the way of Allah. When he heard that people of the city were mobbing the messengers, he came running, tried to explain that the messengers were true, and that he himself was a believer. The result was that his people charged at them in fury. It appears in the narration of Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd رضي الله عنه that with their kicks and blows they martyred them. According to some other narrations, they threw rocks at

them. As for him, even at a time such as this, when he was being beaten mercilessly, he kept saying: رَبِّ اهْدِ قَوْمِي (My Lord, show my people the right way).

It is mentioned in some narrations that these people martyred the three messengers as well. But, no authentic narration mentions specifically as to what happened to them. Probably, they were not killed. (Qurṭubī)

Since this man of piety laid down his life valiantly in the way of Allah, he was blessed with honor as said in Verses 26 and 27: قَالَ يٰلَيْتَ قَوْمِي يَعْلَمُوْنَ بِمَا غَفَرَلِي رَبِّي وَجَعَلَنِي مِنَ الْمُكْرَمِيْنَ ("He said, 'Would that my people knew how my Lord has forgiven me and placed me among the honored ones!"). He was asked to enter Paradise. When he saw the supreme rewards and blessings of Paradise, he remembered his people and wished that if his people could know how generously he was rewarded and what honors were bestowed on him in return for believing in the messengers, perhaps, they too would have believed. This is the wish expressed in this verse.

The prophetic method of *da'wah (preaching)* : Significant guidance for message bearers of Islam

The way the three messengers sent to this habitation addressed polytheists and disbelievers, the way these blessed souls responded to their harsh remarks and threats, and similarly, the way in which Ḥabīb Najjār, who had believed as a result of the Da'wah of these messengers, addressed his people is something worth repeated consideration, for it has great lessons for everyone who is serving the cause of religious preaching and public welfare.

In response to the honest call and advice of these messengers, the polytheists had said three things:

1. You are human beings like us. Why should we do what you ask us to do?

2. Allah, the Raḥmān has not sent any message and book to anyone.

3. You are plain liars.

Just think about it. What sort of reply would this hard talk deserve? Particularly so, when it was in answer to words of selfless good counsel?

But, imagine what these messengers said. They said no more than: رَبُّنَا يَعْلَمُ اِنَّآ اِلَيْكُمْ لَمُرْسَلُوْنَ (Our Lord knows that we have been sent to you). And they said: مَا عَلَيْنَآ اِلَّا الْبَلٰغُ الْمُبِيْنُ (Our obligation is no more than to convey the message clearly.") which amounts to saying, 'We had a duty to do. This we have done. We have spoken plainly and clearly making the message of Allah clear to you. From this point onwards, the choice is yours - you may or may not accept it.' Nothing in their speech has any reflection of the heated remarks made by their addressees. Indeed, their reply is kind and reflecting goodwill for them.

After that, these people became more aggressive. They said, "We take you as a bad omen for us. If you do not desist, we will certainly stone you, and you will be subjected to a painful punishment from us. (36:18) The answer that they deserved was: 'You yourself are the wretched ones and this is because of the nemesis of your own deeds.' But, these messengers said it briefly without alluding to their wretchedness openly and directly. In fact, they said: طَآئِرُكُمْ مَّعَكُمْ (Your bad omen is with your selves). Then, they returned to the same soft approach and said: اَئِنْ ذُكِّرْتُمْ ([Do you take it as bad omen] if you are given a good counsel? which amounts to saying: Would you just think about it? Have we done anything against you? What we have done here is no more than give you some good counsel in your interest. Yes, they did make the gravest of their remark when they said: بَلْ اَنْتُمْ قَوْمٌ مُّسْرِفُوْنَ (Rather, you are a people who cross all limits.") which amounted to saying that their remarks were out of context, not limited to what was being said.

That was a dialogue featuring these messengers. Now, let us turn to what a neo-believer who responded to the invitation of these messengers has to say to his people. He started by telling his people two things, and then invited them to listen to the messengers and accept their good counsel. The first thing he said was: Just imagine, here are these people coming to you from a far place only to give you some good counsel. They are taking care of themselves while bearing by the hardships of travel to and stay at a place that is not their home, yet they are not asking you for anything in return. This is something unusual, and by itself invites an honest person to think. These are selfless people. Why not listen to them? Why not give it a little thought? The second thing is about what they are saying. And what they are saying is reasonable, pure and simple, just

and right. If not this, what else could guide anyone to the true path? After that, since the purpose was to warn his people against their error and straying, it was said: You have forsaken your Creator who is powerful over everything and, in His place, you have taken to gods you have carved out yourself, assuming that they will give you what you need. Why does it not occur to you that they, on their own, can do nothing for you, nor do they have any access to Allah by virtue of which they could ask Him to do what you need to be done?

It will be noticed that Ḥabīb Najjār did not attribute all these things to them, rather, gave it the form of attributing it to his own self, something like saying, 'If I were to do so, it would really be a grave error' and he said: وَمَا لِيَ لَآ اَعْبُدُ الَّذِىْ فَطَرَنِىْ (And what excuse do I have if I do not worship the One who has created me...). This he said so that the adversary might not be enraged, rather, should think about it with a cool mind. After that, when his people remained unmoved by his soft pleas, even threatened to kill him, even then, he uttered no word of curse against them, rather, surrendered his life saying nothing but: رَبِّ اهْدِ قَوْمِىْ (My Lord, show my people the right way). Far too strange is what happened after this oppressed martyr saw the blessings and rewards given to him by Allah in the Paradise. Even at that time, he remembered nobody but his own unjust people and, still filled with goodwill for them, he wished that somehow his people were to know how generously he was welcomed in Paradise - may be, they would abandon their ways of disbelief and started sharing the blessings of Paradise with him! Subḥānallāh, the love and concern for the creatures of Allah run through their blood despite that they are treated unjustly. This is one thing that has changed the destinies of nations, taking them out of the darkness of disbelief and error, and blessing them with a station that even angels envy them.

In our time, *da'wah* workers have generally abandoned this prophetic way, therefore, their call and communication have lost effectiveness. Betraying anger and making damaging comments against the adversary are supposed to be master strokes in lectures and sermons while, in reality, such tactics push the adversary to more hardened stances of doggedness and hostility. O Allah make us follow the way of prophets and bless us with the good fortune of doing what you like and are pleased with.

In verses 28 and 29, it was said: وَمَآ اَنْزَلْنَا عَلٰى قَوْمِهٖ مِنْۢ بَعْدِهٖ مِنْ جُنْدٍ مِّنَ السَّمَآءِ وَمَا كُنَّا مُنْزِلِيْنَ اِنْ كَانَتْ اِلَّا صَيْحَةً وَّاحِدَةً فَاِذَاهُمْ خَامِدُوْنَ (And We did not send down to his people any army from the heavens after him, nor were We (in need) to send down. It was no more than a single Cry, and in no time they were extinguished.)

Mentioned here is the Divine punishment that descended upon the people who had rejected the messengers and had beaten up Ḥabīb Najjār until he died a martyr. And regarding the sending of punishment, it was said that Allah did not have to send an army of angels to seize these people - nor was it the way of Allah to send such an army, because just a single angel of Allah is enough to destroy the greatest, mightiest and the bravest of nations. Why would he need to send an army of angels? After that, given there was a crisp description of the punishment coming upon them - it was just a single shrill Cry of the angel, and there they were, all extinguished under its sonic sweep. It appears in Ḥadīth narrations that the archangel, Jibra'il al-'amin, holding the two sides of the city gate, came up with a hard and horrendous Cry, the shock from which proved unbearable for any living soul, and they all succumbed to sudden death.

The state of their dying has been expressed through the word: خَامِدُوْن (*khāmidun*) by the Qur'ān. The words: خامِدا (*khāmada*) and خُمُوْد (*khumud*) are used to mean the extinguishing or dying of fire. The life of the living depends on energy. When this energy is not there, what remains is death. So, '*khāmidun*' means extinguished, gone extinct, put off.

Verses 33 - 44

وَاٰيَةٌ لَّهُمُ الْاَرْضُ الْمَيْتَةُ ۚۖ اَحْيَيْنٰهَا وَاَخْرَجْنَا مِنْهَا حَبًّا فَمِنْهُ
يَاْكُلُوْنَ ﴿٣٣﴾ وَجَعَلْنَا فِيْهَا جَنّٰتٍ مِّنْ نَّخِيْلٍ وَّاَعْنَابٍ وَّفَجَّرْنَا فِيْهَا
مِنَ الْعُيُوْنِ ﴿٣٤﴾ لِيَاْكُلُوْا مِنْ ثَمَرِهٖ ۙ وَمَا عَمِلَتْهُ اَيْدِيْهِمْ ۭ اَفَلَا
يَشْكُرُوْنَ ﴿٣٥﴾ سُبْحٰنَ الَّذِيْ خَلَقَ الْاَزْوَاجَ كُلَّهَا مِمَّا تُنْۢبِتُ الْاَرْضُ
وَمِنْ اَنْفُسِهِمْ وَمِمَّا لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٣٦﴾ وَاٰيَةٌ لَّهُمُ الَّيْلُ ۚۖ نَسْلَخُ مِنْهُ

النَّهَارَ فَإِذَا هُمْ مُّظْلِمُونَ ﴿٣٧﴾ وَالشَّمْسُ تَجْرِي لِمُسْتَقَرٍّ لَّهَا ۚ ذَٰلِكَ
تَقْدِيرُ الْعَزِيزِ الْعَلِيمِ ﴿٣٨﴾ وَالْقَمَرَ قَدَّرْنَاهُ مَنَازِلَ حَتَّىٰ عَادَ
كَالْعُرْجُونِ الْقَدِيمِ ﴿٣٩﴾ لَا الشَّمْسُ يَنبَغِي لَهَا أَن تُدْرِكَ الْقَمَرَ وَلَا
اللَّيْلُ سَابِقُ النَّهَارِ ۚ وَكُلٌّ فِي فَلَكٍ يَسْبَحُونَ ﴿٤٠﴾ وَآيَةٌ لَّهُمْ أَنَّا
حَمَلْنَا ذُرِّيَّتَهُمْ فِي الْفُلْكِ الْمَشْحُونِ ﴿٤١﴾ وَخَلَقْنَا لَهُم مِّن مِّثْلِهِ
مَا يَرْكَبُونَ ﴿٤٢﴾ وَإِن نَّشَأْ نُغْرِقْهُمْ فَلَا صَرِيخَ لَهُمْ وَلَا هُمْ يُنقَذُونَ
﴿٤٣﴾ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً مِّنَّا وَمَتَاعًا إِلَىٰ حِينٍ ﴿٤٤﴾

And a sign for them is the dead land. We gave it life and brought forth grain from it; so from it they eat. [33] **And We have placed gardens of date-palms and grapes and caused springs to gush forth therein,** [34] **so that they may eat fruits thereof, while it was not made by their hands. Would they not then offer gratitude?** [35] **Pure (from every fault) is the One who has created all the pairs of whatever the earth grows, and of the humans themselves, and of that which they do not know.** [36]

And a sign for them is the night. We strip the (cover of) day from it, and they are suddenly in darkness. [37] **And the sun is quickly proceeding towards its resting place. That is the designing of the All-Mighty, the All-Knowing. [38] And for the moon, We have appointed measured phases, until it turned (pale, curved and fine) like an old branch of date-palm.** [39] **Neither it is for the sun to overtake the moon, nor can the night outpace the day. And each one is floating in an orbit.** [40] **And a sign for them is that We boarded their children at the loaded ship,** [41] **and created for them things similar to it on which they ride.** [42] **And if We so will, We can drown them; then no one will respond to their cry, nor will they be rescued,** [43] **unless there be mercy from Us, and (unless) We let them enjoy for a while.** [44]

Commentary

Most of the subjects taken up in Sūrah Yā Sīn related to signs of Divine power and the rewards and favors bestowed on human beings. These have been harnessed to prove that there is a life hereafter and that

people need to be firm in their belief in being raised again and having to face the Day of Judgment. In the verse cited above, the Divine signs pointed to are, on one hand, clear proofs of His perfect power, while on the other, they serve as mirrors of particular rewards and favors of Allah Ta'ālā bestowed on human beings and the rest of creatures. In this, lie unusual lessons of wisdom.

In the first verse (33), the land on which we live has been cited as an example. It is there, all the time, before everyone., It is physically seen, when rain come down from the sky and pour water over the dry land, that it is revived by the rain which makes it, so to say, live again. The outcome starts showing up in the form of vegetation, trees and their fruits. Mentioned thereafter were streams that were made to run below the land and on its surface in order to help the trees grow and survive. It was said: لِيَأْكُلُوْا مِنْ ثَمَرِهٖ (so that they may eat fruits thereof). In other words, the purpose of harnessing the entire range of the natural forces of winds, clouds and the land is that people get to eat their fruits. All these things can be observed by seeing with one's own eyes. And everyone knows how to do that. Onwards from here, human beings were alerted to something for which this whole universal system was put into place.

Growth of vegetation is not an act of man

It was said: وَمَا عَمِلَتْهُ اَيْدِيْهِمْ (*wa mā 'amilathu aiydīhim*: while it was not made by their hands). The majority of commentators have taken the letter: مَا (*mā*) in this verse for negation which means that 'it was not made by their hands. According to this interpretation, this sentence has a ring of warning given to heedless man: Just think about your job and the labor you put in it. What is your true share in the great blossoming of fruits? Of course, you put the seed in the land, water it, let the earth be soft so that delicate buds sprout without being obstructed by something. But, making a whole tree grow from that tiny seed, having leaves and branches shoot out from it and then commission it to produce all sorts of fruits is something totally different. What is your contribution in all these things?

This is the unshared domain of the one who is absolutely powerful, wise and knowing, and this can only be an act of God. Therefore, human beings are duty-bound to derive benefit out of these things, yet they should never forget the Creator and master of whatever there is. Parallel

to this, there is a verse of Sūrah Waqi'ah where it was said: أَفَرَءَيْتُم مَّا تَحْرُثُونَ ءَأَنتُمْ تَزْرَعُونَهُ أَمْ نَحْنُ الزَّارِعُونَ (Well, tell Me about that (seed) which you sow: Is it you who grow it, or are We the One who grows? - 56:63-64). The outcome is: 'Even though human beings do not share in the making of these fruits in any way, yet it was Our grace that We created them, made them the owners of the whole range, as well as taught them the ways of eating and deriving other benefits out of these.'

The particular difference between human and animal food

Ibn Jarīr and some other commentators have not taken the letter (مَا) *mā* in: وَمَا عَمِلَتْهُ (*wa mā 'amilath*) for negation, rather have read it as a relative pronoun in the sense of: الَّذِى (*al-ladhī*: that which). In that case, this part of verse 35 would come to mean that all these things have been created, so that they eat fruits therefrom, and also eat that which human hands make, produce or process out of these vegetations and fruits. For example, desserts made from fruit, chutneys and pickles, and the extracts of oil from some fruits are the outcome of human effort and processing. This would come to mean that these fruits created by nature are firstly made edible without any functional human input, then Allah Ta'ālā has given man the ingenuity to prepare all sorts of delicious and useful things from each single kind of fruit.

Thus, creating fruit and giving man the expertise to compound fruit with other ingredients and turn it into a variety of tasteful and useful edibles is yet another blessing from Allah. After having reported this Tafsir of Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Kathīr has said that this Tafsir is supported by the phonetic rendering (Qirā'ah) of Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd ﷺ as well because, the word: مِمَّا (*mimmā*) takes the place of: مَا (*mā*) in his *qirā'ah*, that is: مِمَّا عَمِلَتْهُ أَيْدِيهِمْ (*mimmā 'amilathu aidīhim*: from that which their hands have processed).

Going into a little detail, it can be said that animals too eat vegetation and fruits. Some eat meat. Some others eat soil. But, they all feed on simples. The grass eater eats grass only. The meat eater eats meat only. Preparing different kinds of food by combining a variety of ingredients whereby the addition of salt, chilies, sugar and the sour makes food turn into tens of kinds happens to be the singularity of human beings alone. They alone have been given the ability to put different edibles together and come out with a meal tasting different from the other. This is

ingenious. The preparation of meat with salt and seasonings and fruits with sweeteners is a culinary art Allah Ta'ālā has taught human beings to use to their advantage. The text, after recounting the substance and design of these great Divine blessings in these verses, concludes by saying: أَفَلَا يَشْكُرُونَ (afala yashkurun: Would they not then offer gratitude?) which means that even after having seen all these things how is it possible from a reasonable person that he does not be grateful to Allah? Onwards from here, after having mentioned land produce and climate, human beings and animals have been included in the spectrum whereby there appears yet another sign of the absolute Power: سُبْحٰنَ الَّذِىْ خَلَقَ الْاَزْوَاجَ كُلَّهَا مِمَّا تُنْبِتُ الْاَرْضُ وَمِنْ اَنْفُسِهِمْ وَمِمَّا لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ (Pure is the One who has created all the pairs of whatever the earth grows, and of the humans themselves, and of that which they do not know. - 36:36). Here, the word: اَزْوَاجٌ (*azwāj*) is the plural form of: زَوْجٌ (*zawj*) and means pairs. A pair is two things of the same kind and refers to a couple, or a match of the other. For example, a married man and woman is a pair, hence, each one of them is the zawj of the other. Similarly, males and females of animals are pairs. In the botanical kingdom, many trees have been found as having males and females among them. Date palms and Papaya are common examples. Others may also be like these as is the case with all trees bearing fruits and flowers in which, according to modern scientific information, procreation has been identified. In the same way, it is not improbable if the same arrangement of male and female exists in solids, minerals and other elements of creation, though in a manner not discovered as yet - towards which the text points out in: مِمَّا لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ (*mimmā lā ya 'lamūn*: and from that which they do not know - 36). Generally, commentators refer to: اَزْوَاجٌ (*azwāj*: pairs) as categories and kinds because the way male and female are called pairs, similarly, two contrasting things are also referred to as pairs, like chill and heat, land and water, sorrow and happiness, health and sickness, then, within each of these, many further degrees, categories and kinds come up in terms of high, low and the average. Similarly, there are many categories and kinds in human beings and animals in terms of color, form, language and way of life. The word: اَزْوَاجٌ (*azwāj*: pairs) is inclusive of all these categories and kinds. In the present verse (36), mentioned first is: مِمَّا تُنْبِتُ الْاَرْضُ (all the pairs of whatever the earth grows,) - These are the categories and kinds of vegetation. After that, in: مِنْ اَنْفُسِهِمْ (and of the humans themselves,) mentioned there are

the categories and kinds of human selves as such. And after that, in: مِمَّا لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ (and from that which they do not know) included there are thousands of such creations as have not yet unfolded before human beings. Allah Ta'ālā alone knows how many categories and kinds of living forms, vegetation and minerals exist under the layers of the earth and in rivers and in mountains.

In verse 37, it was said: وَاٰيَةٌ لَّهُمُ الَّيْلُ نَسْلَخُ مِنْهُ النَّهَارَ (And a sign for them is the night. We strip the [cover of] day from it, and they are suddenly in darkness.). After having described the signs of Divine power in what was created on the earth, the text mentions cosmic creations. The word: سَلْخ (salkh) literally means to skin. If the skin from an animal or the cover from things is removed, the thing inside becomes obvious. Allah Ta'ālā has, in this similitude, pointed out that the real element in this world is darkness. Light is transitory, for it spreads over the earth through planets and stars. In a predetermined system, at a fixed time, this light that is spread over the darkness of the world is removed from on top. What remains is darkness. This, in common parlance, is called night.

In verse 38, it was said: وَالشَّمْسُ تَجْرِىْ لِمُسْتَقَرٍّ لَّهَا ذٰلِكَ تَقْدِيْرُ الْعَزِيْزِ الْعَلِيْمِ (And the sun is quickly proceeding towards its resting place. That is the designing of the All-Mighty, the All-Knowing. 36:38). The word: مُسْتَقَرّ (*mustaqarr*) is used to denote place of rest as well as time of rest, that is, it could be time-oriented and, space-oriented too. Then, this word is also employed in the sense of the end or destination of a course or journey - even if another journey begins immediately after it without any break or stillness (as mentioned by Ibn Kathīr).

Some respected commentators have taken the word: مُسْتَقَرّ (mustaqarr) at this place as a time-oriented destination, that is, when the sun reaches the end of its movement already determined - and that time is the Day of Doom (the Qiyāmah). In the light of this Tafsir, the verse would mean that the sun is moving on its orbit supported by such a precise and perfect system that does never betray the difference of even a minute or second. Thousands of years have passed over this orbit. But, all this is not everlasting. There is a particular point in time and space for it. When that is arrived at, this solar system and the movement will stop, end - and that is the Day of Qiyāmah. This Tafsir has been reported from Qatādah ﷺ (Ibn Kathīr).

And a verse from Sūrah Az-Zumar in the Holy Qur'ān also supports it, that is, the word: مُسْتَقَرّ (*mustaqarr*) means a time-oriented destination or abode and refers to the Day of Qiyāmah. The words of the verse of Sūrah az-Zumar are:

خَلَقَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضَ بِالْحَقِّ يُكَوِّرُ الَّيْلَ عَلَى النَّهَارِ وَيُكَوِّرُ النَّهَارَ عَلَى الَّيْلِ وَسَخَّرَ الشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ كُلٌّ يَّجْرِىْ لِاَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى

He created the heavens and the earth in His wisdom. He wraps the night over the day and He wraps the day over the night, and He has put the Sun and the Moon under His command, each one of tham moving for an appointed term. (39:5)

The statement in this verse is nearly the same as given in the present verse of Sūrah Yā Sīn. Firstly, the alternation of the night and the day has been described through a similitude in terms of common perception - Allah Ta'ālā puts the cover of night over the day and that of day over the night. Thus, the night and the day have been likened to two covers. The cover of the night is draped over the day and it is night, and the cover of the day is draped over the night and it is day. After that, it was said that the sun and the moon are both subjugated before Allah Ta'ālā and are subservient to His command. Each is moving up to an appointed term. The words used in the text are: اَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى (*ajalim-musammā*) meaning fixed term, and the verse means that the movement of both the sun and the moon is not everlasting. When it reaches a certain fixed term, that is, the Day of Qiyāmah, this movement shall stand terminated. In the present verse of Sūrah Yā Sīn too, the word: مُسْتَقَرّ (mustaqarr) quite obviously means this very fixed or appointed term, that is, a time-oriented point of arrival, destination or abode. In the light of this Tafsir, neither does the sense of the verse present any difficulty, nor is there any objection in terms of astronomy and mathematics.

And some respected commentators have taken it to mean a spatial destination or abode as based on the following Ḥadīth reported in the Ṣaḥīḥs of al-Bukhārī and Muslim and others from several Ṣaḥābah and chains of authority.

According to a narration of Sayyidnā Abū Dharr al-Ghifārī ﷺ, once he was present in the company of the Holy Prophet ﷺ at the time of sunset. Addressing him, he said, "Abū Dharr, do you know where the sun sets?" Sayyidnā Abū Dharr ﷺ says that he submitted: "Allah and His

Messenger know best." Thereupon, the Holy Prophet ﷺ said, " The sun keeps on moving until when it reaches beneath the 'Arsh (the Throne) it makes *sajdah* (*sujūd* or prostration)." After that, he said, "This is what 'mustaqarr' means in this verse: وَالشَّمْسُ تَجْرِى لِمُسْتَقَرٍّ لَّهَا (And the sun is quickly proceeding towards its resting place.).

In a narration, again from Sayyidnā Abū Dharr, there appear the additional words to the effect: "I asked the Holy Prophet ﷺ the explanation of: وَالشَّمْسُ تَجْرِى لِمُسْتَقَرٍّ لَّهَا (And the sun is quickly proceeding towards its resting place.). He said: مُسْتَقَرُّهَا تَحْتَ الْعَرْشِ (mustaqarruha that al-'Arsh: Its resting place is under the 'Arsh). Al-Bukhārī has reported this narration at several place and, with the exception of Ibn Mājah, this narration is present in all Six Books.

And there is a Ḥadīth bearing on the same subject reported from Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd ﷺ as well. It has some additions to the effect that, every day, when the sun reaches beneath the 'Arsh, it performs a Sajdah and seeks permission for the next orbit. After the permission, it starts the next orbit - until, there will come that day when it will not have the permission to start the next orbit. Instead, it will be commanded to go back towards where it had come from. In other words, it would be asked to go beneath the earth from the side of the West, then, return from the same side of the West and rise from the West. The day it happens, it will be the sign of the Day of Qiyāmah being absolutely close and, thereafter the doors of 'iman and *taubah* (repentance) will be closed. That will be a time when the *taubah* (repentance) of anyone sunk in sin or the *taubah* of anyone soaked in shirk and kufr will not be accepted (Ibn Kathīr with reference to 'Abd-ur- Razzaq).

The prostration of the sun: A look into the phenomenon of the sun performing *sajdah* (prostration) beneath the *'Arsh*

From these narrations of Ḥadīth, we learn that *mustaqarr* means a spatial destination, that is, a place where one orbit of the movement of the sun stands completed - and they also tell us that this place is beneath the *'Arsh*. Hence, the verse would mean that, every day, the sun moves towards a particular destination, and once it has reached there, it performs *sajdah* before Allah Ta'ālā and seeks His permission for the next orbit. Once the permission is given, it begins the next orbit.

But, when seen outwardly, several strong difficulties arise on the

basis of principles laid down by experiments, observations and astronomy.

1. The state of the 'Arsh of Raḥmān (generally referred to as the Divine Throne) as understood from the Qur'ān and Sunnah is that it surrounds all that we know as the masses of land and expanses of the sky. All these masses and expanses along with planets and stars, without any exception, are enclosed within the 'Arsh - and the 'Arsh of Raḥmān holds this entire cosmic universe inside itself. If seen from this angle, the sun is, in all conditions and at all times, simply under the 'Arsh. What, then, would be the sense of going beneath the 'Arsh after it sets?

2. It is common observation that the sun, after it sets at some place, does rise elsewhere. Therefore, its rising and setting is an ongoing phenomenon. What then is the meaning of going beneath the 'Arsh after setting and doing Sajdah?

3. From the apparent sense of the Ḥadīth mentioned above, we learn that the sun, after having reached its destination (mustaqarr), pauses within which it offers Sajdah before Allah and seeks the permission for the next orbit - although, there being no break in the movement of the sun at any time is an open observation. And since this rising and setting of the sun keeps taking place all the time in terms of different locations, therefore, this pause should also be there all the time as a result of which the sun should not have any movement any time.

Such difficulties are related not only to astronomy, but also to observations and experiences that cannot be bypassed. Technically, the daily movement of the sun under the arrangement of the celestial sphere and its being positioned in the fourth heaven is a theoretical assumption of Ptolemy that was refuted by Pythagoras. Modern knowledge has confirmed the error in the theory of Ptolemy and also brought the soundness of the theory of Pythagoras to the level of certitude. Then there are the space flights in our time and the spectacle of human access to the moon that makes at least this much certain that all planets are in the lower space of the sky, not inside. The verse of the Qur'ān: وَكُلٌّ فِي فَلَكٍ يَّسْبَحُونَ (And each one is floating in an orbit. - Yā Sīn, 36:40) which is to appear a little later also confirms this view. Since this view is also suggestive of the daily rising and setting as being from the movement of the earth and not from the movement of the sun, another technical

difficulty is added to the understanding of the aforementioned Ḥadīth.

To understand its answer, it must be borne in mind that to the extent the explanation of the cited verse is concerned, no difficulty out of the doubts and difficulties mentioned above relates to the Qur'ān. The sense it carries is no more than that Allah Ta'ālā has commissioned the sun to move in such an organized and steady way that it keeps moving continuously in a single state towards its destination (mustaqarr). If, this destination is taken to mean a time-oriented destination - that is, the Ḍay of Qiyāmah - as in the Tafsir of Qatādah, then, it would mean that this movement of the sun shall continue in a single state right through the last Day of Qiyāmah - and shall terminate on that very Day. And if it were to be taken as a spatial destination, even then, its destination can be said as being the point in the orbit of the sun, the point from which the sun started its movement at the time of the initial creation. When it reaches that point, one orbit through a day and night stands completed, for this very point is the end of its journey and, once it reaches there, the next orbit begins. As for the precise determination of where lies that point from which this magnificent orbit of the sun started in eternity, the noble Qur'ān does not throw human beings into unnecessary debates of this nature, something that does not bring them any benefit, neither in this world nor in the world-to-come. This is an inquiry of this very nature. Therefore, the Qur'ān has bypassed it and drawn attention to the essenṭial purpose. That purpose is to put particular aspects of the most perfect power and wisdom of Allah Ta'ālā into clear focus. It was said that the sun is the largest and the brightest sphere of this universe. That too did neither come into existence automatically, nor does it move on its own, nor can it sustain. In its present movement through days and nights all the time, it moves under the permission and will of Allah Ta'ālā.

Any doubt, out of the doubts mentioned above, does not apply to what has been said in the cited verse. However, all these doubts and difficulties in comprehension do arise from the Ḥadīth statement about the sun that soon after its setting, it goes beneath the 'Arsh, performs *sajdah* and seeks permission to start the next orbit. And this debate sprung up in relation to this verse for the reason that, in some words of the Ḥadīth, reference has been made to this verse. Answers to these doubts given by experts of Ḥadīth and commentators of the Qur'ān differ. From the apparent

connotation of the words there, it is generally gathered that this *sajdah* of the sun takes effect only once in a day-night span after its setting. Respected writers, who have taken the Ḥadīth in terms of its apparent sense, have laid down three probabilities concerning the setting: (1) That it may refer to the setting in the main part of populated areas, that is, of a place the setting of the sun whereat holds good for its setting for the majority of the population of the world; (2) that it be the setting of the Equator; or (3) the setting on the horizon of Madīnah. Thus, the difficulty that the setting and rising of the sun is a phenomenon which keeps manifesting itself all the time, every moment, does not remain there, because this Ḥadīth is talking about the setting of a particular horizon. But, the clear-cut and cloudless rejoinder seems to be that which my teacher, 'Allamāh Shabbīr Aḥmad Usmanī has given in his treatise: سُجُوْدُ الشَّمس (Sujudu'sh-Shams: The Prostration of the Sun) which finds support in the statements of several leading commentators.

Before one proceeds to understand the presentation, it is useful to first understand a matter of principle about prophetic teachings and interpretations. The noble prophets, may peace be upon them, and the Scriptures they bring incessantly invite the entire Divine creation to ponder over whatever has been created in the heavens and the earth, and it is from these that they build their argument to prove the existence of Allah Ta'ālā, His Oneness, Knowledge and Power. But, deliberation in these things is desirable, according to Shari'ah, only to the extent of its relevance to one's worldly and social requirement or religious and other worldly need. Beyond that, the great mass of the creation of Allah is not thrown into the senseless concern of digging into bland philosophical hair splitting and the ultimate reality of things. The reason is that, first of all, the real and perfect knowledge of the ultimate reality of things is something scientists and philosophers have themselves been unable to find out, despite having spent their entire lives in the pursuit - not to say much about the poor masses. Let us suppose, even if this could be acquired somehow, yet it fulfills no religious need, nor does it help to acquire something materially sound and worthwhile, what is the sense of indulging in this unnecessary and wasteful debate? Obviously, nothing but a waste of wonderful years of life and a waste of precious wealth!

It should be borne in mind that the argument of the Qur'ān and the

noble Prophets through the creations in the heavens and the earth and the major changes that occur therein is limited to the extent that could be rationalized by every human beings by virtue of bare observation and elementary deliberation. Technical refinements of philosophy and mathematics that can be resolved by experts in the field alone are not the material on which an argument of this nature is based, nor are people invited to deliberate in these. The reason is simple. Believing in Allah Ta'ālā and acting in accordance with His message is the duty of every human being - learned or illiterate, man or woman, urbanite or villager, dweller of some mountain or island. Therefore, prophetic teachings are synchronized with the level of perception, reason and understanding of common people that need no technical expertise.

Take the example of knowing the times of Ṣalāh, fixing the orientation to Qiblah, and knowing the months, years and dates. The knowledge of all these things can also be acquired through mathematical computations. But, the Sharī'ah of Islam has, rather than rely on high-tech mathematical calculations to determine any of these things, placed reliance on common observations. Months and years and their dates were set in accordance with the lunar calendar. The basis of determining whether the new moon has or has not appeared was declared to be physical observation alone, the seeing of the new moon. The days of fasting and the Ḥajj were fixed on that very basis. When some people asked the Holy Prophet ﷺ about the secret behind the waning, waxing and disappearing of the moon and then its rising again, the answer to it was given by the Qur'ān on his behalf: قُلْ هِيَ مَوَاقِيتُ لِلنَّاسِ وَالْحَجِّ (Say: They are indicative of time for the people, and of the Ḥajj - Al-Baqarah, 2:189). In other words, the Holy Prophet ﷺ was asked to tell people that all those changes occurring in the life of the moon are there so that they could find out when the month begins and ends and then find out its dates and determine the days of the Ḥajj. This answer served them with a warning against their unnecessary and ineffectual question, because no business of theirs, in this world or in the next, hinges on finding the reality behind it. Therefore, they were supposed to ask only about something that related to either their worldly or other worldly need.

After these initial remarks, let us give a little thought to the essential matter before us. Is it not that, in the cited verses, Allah Ta'ālā has, after

having mentioned some manifestations of His perfect power and infinite wisdom, invited human beings to believe? Of these, mentioned first was the land that is before us all the time: وَاٰيَةٌ لَّهُمُ الْاَرْضُ (And a sign for them is the land.- 33). Then, mention was made of how rains made it come alive and the growth of trees and other produce became possible - something everyone sees and knows: اَحْيَيْنٰهَا وَاَخْرَجْنَا مِنْهَا حَبًّا (We gave it life and brought forth grain from it.- 33). Mentioned first after that was the daily alternation of the night and day: وَاٰيَةٌ لَّهُمُ الَّيْلُ (And a sign for them is the night) Mentioned thereafter were planets and stars. Out of these, about the sun it was said: وَالشَّمْسُ تَجْرِىْ لِمُسْتَقَرٍّ لَّهَا ذٰلِكَ تَقْدِيْرُ الْعَزِيْزِ الْعَلِيْمِ (And the sun is quickly proceeding towards its resting place. That is the designing of the All-Mighty, the All-Knowing.- 38). Think about it. The purpose here is to tell that the sun is not moving on its own, not of its volition or power. Instead, it is moving in subservience to the One who is Mighty and Knowing, and moving under the predetermined system originated by an entity with great power and knowledge. The Holy Prophet ﷺ, close to the time of one sunset, had alerted Sayyidnā Abū Dharr al-Ghiffārī رضي الله عنه to the reality behind it during a question answer interlude with him. He has told him that the sun, at the time of its setting, performs a Sajdah before Allah Taʻālā beneath the 'Arsh and seeks the permission to start the next orbit. When it has the permission, it moves as usual and rises from the east in the morning. Its outcome is no more than that the atmosphere of the world goes through a new transformation at the time of the setting and rising of the sun, something that depends on the sun. The Holy Prophet ﷺ, took this moment as suitable to teach human beings their essential lesson that they should not take the sun to be an independent entity moving of its own volition and power. It moves only under the permission and will of Allah Taʻālā. Every time it rises and every time it sets has to be with His permission, for it is subservient to His permission. This very act of moving under the command of Allah Taʻālā has been declared to be its *sajdah*, the act of prostration before its creator. The reason is that a Sajdah made by anything happens to be appropriate to its state of being as the Qur'ān has itself clearly said: كُلٌّ قَدْ عَلِمَ صَلٰوتَهٗ وَتَسْبِيْحَهٗ : "Everything [in the creation of Allah] already knows its Ṣalāh [mode of worship] and its *tasbih* [mode of Divine glorification" - An-Nūr, 24:41]. It means that the entire creation of Allah is engaged in worshipping and glorifying Allah, but each has its own separate way of doing it that has

already been taught to it just like human beings who have been told how to do their Ṣalāh and Tasbīḥ. Therefore, taking the *sajdah* of the sun to mean that it can take effect only when it places its forehead on some floor like a human being would not be correct.

And when it stands clarified from the statements of the Qur'ān and Sunnah that the Divine Throne, the 'Arsh of the Raḥmān, surrounds all heavens and stars and surfaces, it is already obvious that the sun is nowhere but under the 'Arsh, at all times and at every place. And when experience bears out that the time the sun is setting at one place, it is also rising at another. Therefore, no moment of the sun is free of either rising or setting. Thus, the being of the sun under the 'Arsh is also perennial under all states and so is its setting and rising. Therefore, the outcome of the subject mentioned in the Ḥadīth is that the sun, in its entire orbit, remains in the state of prostration (Sajdah) before Allah under the 'Arsh, that is, it moves under His permission and command. And this cycle will stay activated right through the proximity of the last day of the Qiyāmah until comes the time for the emergence of the sign that the Qiyāmah is very close. When this happens, the sun will, rather than start its next orbit, be commanded to turn back - and then, it will rise from the west. At that time, the door of *taubah* (repentance) will be closed and no declaration of faith ('Īmān) or repentance (Taubah) from anyone shall remain acceptable at that hour.

In short, this particularity of the setting of the sun, its passing under the 'Arsh, the making of prostration there and the incidence of seeking permission for the next orbit mentioned in the narration being studied is simply a similitude in consonance with the mores of effective prophetic teaching and in terms of common perception. Neither does it make it necessary that it performs Sajdah on some land surface like a human being, nor does it make it necessary that there be some pause in the movement of the sun at the time of making a *sajdah*, nor does it mean that it goes to some particular place doing only one *sajdah* during a day and night, and nor that it goes beneath the 'Arsh after setting only. But, at this time of great alternation, when people are seeing that the sun is receding away from them, what has been done is that they have been appraised of the truth of what is happening in the manner of a similitude while the reality is that this whole thing is happening because of the sun

moving beneath the 'Arsh in subservience to the Divine command - the sun does not have any capability or power of its own. So, the way, at this time, the people of Madīnah were convinced that the sun would now make its *sajdah* and seek permission for the next orbit, similarly, the message was relayed onwards to every place where the sun would be setting and everyone there would stand advised of the lesson thereof. Thus, the truth of the matter turns out to be that the sun at every moment while moving on its orbit keeps offering *sajdah* before Allah Ta'ālā and keeps seeking permission to move ahead - and it needs no pause or break to make Sajdah or seek permission.

Following this submission, there remains no doubt concerning the Ḥadīth quoted, neither in terms of observations, nor in terms of the rules of astronomy, nor in the light of the position taken by Ptolemy or Pythagoras - though, the latter has found support in newer investigation. In either case, there remains no doubt or difficulty in the comprehension of the said Ḥadīth.

As for the question about the sun making Sajdah and seeking permission to start the next orbit as mentioned in the Ḥadīth, where it is stressed that doing all this required life, awareness and reason. The sun and the moon are devoid of life and consciousness. How could these actions issue forth from them? An answer to this has already appeared under the verse of the Qur'ān: وَإِنْ مِّنْ شَيْءٍ إِلَّا يُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِهٖ (And there is not a single thing that does not extol His purity and praise - Al-'Isrā', 17:44). (For commentary, please see Ma'ariful Qur'ān, English, Vol. V, pp. 506-510). There it was said that things we take to be devoid of life, sense and consciousness do have a special share of spirit, life, sense and consciousness. However, their life, sense and consciousness are insignificant as compared with humans and animals, so insignificant that these cannot be perceived commonly. But, there is no proof for its absence either, neither in the revealed law, nor in reason while the noble Qur'ān, in the verse cited above, has proved their being possessors of the elements of life, reason and consciousness, something also recognized in new investigations: وَاللّٰه سبحانه و تعالى اعلم And Allah who is pure and High knows best.

Special Note

From these clarifications of the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth, it is established that both the sun and the moon are in motion, moving for a fixed term.

This refutes the theory that the sun has no movement at all. The findings of the latest research have also refuted this presumption.

The text now turns to: وَالْقَمَرَ قَدَّرْنَاهُ مَنَازِلَ حَتّٰى عَادَ كَالْعُرْجُوْنِ الْقَدِيْمِ (And for the moon, We have appointed measured phases, until it turned [pale, curved and fine] like an old branch of date-palm.- 36:39). The dried bough of a date tree that gets bent like a bow is called: عُرْجُوْن (*'urjūn*).

The stages of the moon

The word: مَنَازِل (*manāzil*) is the plural of: مَنْزِل (*manzil*) and denotes the place one arrives at. Allah Ta'ālā has bound the movement of the sun and the moon both with particular points, each of which is known as a Manzil or stage. Since the moon completes its orbit in one month, therefore, it has thirty or twenty-nine stages. But, as the moon disappears at least for a day during every month, therefore, its stages are generally taken to be twenty-eight. Astronomers have given these stages particular names in congruence with the stars that are found in the frontal proximity of these stages. Even during the days of Arabs of Jāhiliyyah, stages were determined by these very names. The Holy Qur'ān is far above these technical names. What it means to communicate are only the distances the moon traverses during particular days.

Relevant details have appeared in the commentary on Sūrah Yūnus. It can be seen in Ma'āriful-Qur'ān, English, Volume IV, pages: 515-520. In this verse of Sūrah Yūnus 10:5, the stages of the sun and the moon both have been mentioned: جَعَلَ الشَّمْسَ ضِيَآءً وَّالْقَمَرَ نُوْرًا وَّقَدَّرَهٗ مَنَازِلَ: "[He is the One who] has made the sun a glow and the moon a light, and determined for it the stages - 10:5". The only difference is that the stages of the moon are identified through observation, while the stages of the sun are calculated mathematically. By saying: حَتّٰى عَادَ كَالْعُرْجُوْنِ الْقَدِيْمِ (until it turned [pale, curved and fine] like an old branch of date-palm.- 36:39), described there is the state of the moon towards the end of the month when it recedes from the stage of the full moon to the extent that it transforms into the shape of a dried old bough bent like a bow. It is in consonance with the Arab surrounding that it has been likened to a dried bough of the date tree that assumes the shape of a crescent.

In verse 40, it was said: وَكُلٌّ فِيْ فَلَكٍ يَّسْبَحُوْنَ (And each one is floating in an orbit - 40). Literally, the word: فَلَك (falak) does not mean the sky.

Instead, it means the orbit in which some star moves. This verse has also appeared earlier in Sūrah Al-Anbiyā' (21:33). It tells us that the moon is not contained within some sky as presumed by the astronomical theory of Ptolemy. Instead, it moves in a particular orbit in the space lower than it. Then, there are recent investigations as well as the human access to the moon that have made it certain.

In verse 41 and 42, it was said: وَاٰيَةٌ لَّهُمْ اَنَّا حَمَلْنَا ذُرِّيَّتَهُمْ فِى الْفُلْكِ الْمَشْحُوْنِ وَخَلَقْنَا لَهُمْ مِّنْ مِّثْلِهٖ مَا يَرْكَبُوْنَ (And a sign for them is that We boarded their children at the loaded ship, and created for them things similar to it on which they ride.). Mentioned earlier to these verses were manifestations of Divine power and wisdom in what was created on the earth and in the heavens in that order. In the present verses, Divine power over the sea and its adjuncts has been mentioned. It was said that Allah Ta'ālā has made heavily laden boats and ships capable of sailing on the surface of the waters and reach distant places without getting drowned in route. Then, it was said in the verse that "We boarded their children at the loaded ship" - although, those who embarked the Ark were these very people. Perhaps, children were mentioned for the reason that one's children and family place a great burden of responsibility on parents, particularly when unable to move around. Thus, the sense of the verse is to emphasize that it is not only they who were riding the boat, but there also were young children and aged men and women and their belongings with them. The boat carried both, people and their things. In the verse following immediately (42), it was said: خَلَقْنَا لَهُمْ مِّنْ مِّثْلِهٖ مَا يَرْكَبُوْنَ (and created for them things similar to it on which they ride.- 36:42). It means that human beings have not only been provided with boats and ships that serve as rides for themselves and carry their things, but Allah has also created other rides like the boat. From this, people of Arabia have taken it to mean the ride of camels as habitually familiar to them, particularly so, because the camel is a carrier of things. It takes heavy loads across countries, therefore, the Arab called camels: The Boat of the Land.

No wonder if the Qur'ān is alluding to the aeroplane!

But, it is obvious that the Qur'ān has not specifically named a camel or some other particular mode of conveyance at this place. This includes every such means of transportation that carries people and their baggage, accompanied or unaccompanied, right up to their desired destination. In

our time, the invention of aeroplanes has made it amply clear that aeroplanes are the greatest substantiation of the Qur'ānic statement: مِنْ مِّثْلِهٖ (*mim-mithlihī*: things similar to it). Then, its similarity with boat or ship is strongly supportive of it, because the way the ship of the sea sails on the surface of the water, and the mass of water does not make it drown, similarly, the airplane sails or flies over the bed of air and it does not throw it down. No wonder if the Qur'ān may have left the statement: مِنْ مِّثْلِهٖ مَا يَرْكَبُوْنَ (*mim-mithlihī mā yarkabūn*: things similar to it that they ride) ambiguous, so that all modes of conveyance and transportation that continue to be invented right through the last Day of Qiyāmah get to be included therein. And Allah knows best.

Verses 45 - 47

وَاِذَا قِيْلَ لَهُمُ اتَّقُوْا مَا بَيْنَ اَيْدِيْكُمْ وَمَا خَلْفَكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُوْنَ ﴿٤٥﴾ وَمَا تَاْتِيْهِمْ مِّنْ اٰيَةٍ مِّنْ اٰيٰتِ رَبِّهِمْ اِلَّا كَانُوْا عَنْهَا مُعْرِضِيْنَ ﴿٤٦﴾ وَاِذَا قِيْلَ لَهُمْ اَنْفِقُوْا مِمَّا رَزَقَكُمُ اللّٰهُ ۙ قَالَ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا لِلَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْٓا اَنُطْعِمُ مَنْ لَّوْ يَشَآءُ اللّٰهُ اَطْعَمَهٗٓ ۖ اِنْ اَنْتُمْ اِلَّا فِيْ ضَلٰلٍ مُّبِيْنٍ ﴿٤٧﴾

And (they pay no heed) when it is said to them, " Save yourselves from that (punishment) which is before you (in this world) and that which will come after you (die), so that you may receive mercy". [45] **And there comes to them no sign from the signs of your Lord, but they turn averse to it.** [46] **And when it is said to them, " Spend (to the needy) from the provision Allah has given to you", the disbelievers say to the believers, " Shall we feed those whom Allah could have fed , if Allah so willed ? You are but in the open error."** [47]

Commentary

In the previous verses, through a description of Divine manifestations of power and wisdom in the creation of the heavens and the earth, people were invited to recognize their creator and believe that He alone is worthy of worship and, on the acceptance of this invitation, a promise of everlasting blessings was made along with a warning of severe

punishment on its rejection. In the present verses and in the verses following these, there is a description of the disbelieving people of Makkah who were their direct addressees and who remained unmoved and unaffected either when persuaded to do something reward worthy, or when warned against some likely punishment.

In this connection, two dialogues between believers and disbelievers have been narrated. Believers invite them to fear the punishment of Allah that can come before them even in this mortal world while, after their death, it has to come to them in the Hereafter after all. If they, it is said to them, were to believe in fear of this punishment, it would be better for them. But, the disbelievers show their aversion despite having heard all that. This aversion of theirs has not been expressly mentioned here in the words of the Qur'ān, because the 'I'rād' or aversion mentioned in the next verse automatically proves their aversion here too. And in accordance with the rule of syntax, the apodosis or principal clause of the condition: اِذَا قِيۡلَ لَهُمۡ (*idhā qīla lahum*: When it is said to them) remains elided. The word of the next verse (46) bear witness to this elision, that is, whenever a verse or sign from their Lord comes to them, they show nothing but their aversion to it. (And that is why the words "they pay no heed" are added in brackets in the translation of this verse above.)

The wisdom behind some people receiving their sustenance indirectly

In the second dialogue, believers exhort the disbelievers to help the poor and needy and feed the hungry and prompt them to give to the destitute from what Allah had given to them. In their sarcastic response, the disbelievers say: You say that Allah is the provider and sustainer of the entire creation, yet He did not give them anything. Why should we? As for your words of advice to us that we should provide for them, this is nothing but that you have gone astray. Do you want to make us their Razzāq: Provider? These disbelievers too confessed that Allah Ta'ālā was the Provider as in the Qur'ān: وَلَئِنۡ سَاَلۡتَهُمۡ مَّنۡ نَّزَّلَ مِنَ السَّمَآءِ مَآءً فَاَحۡيَا بِهِ الۡاَرۡضَ مِنۡۢ بَعۡدِ مَوۡتِهَا لَيَقُوۡلُنَّ اللّٰهُ. (And if you ask them "as to who sends down water from the sky, then revives the land with it, they will certainly say, "Allah". - Al-'Ankabūt, 29:63)

This tells us that they too regarded Allah Ta'ālā as the ultimate Razzāq or Provider, but when in confrontation with believers, they

sarcastically remarked: When Allah is the Razzāq, the Provider, let Him provide for them too - why should we? This was as if these dim-witted people thought that giving in the way of Allah and providing for the poor was contrary to Allah's attribute in being the Master-Provider of all sustenance! They just did not understand that as the absolute Giver and Provider, He has His own wise law operating in this world. By giving to one person, He makes that person a conduit for others and thus gives them indirectly - although, he is perfectly and certainly capable of having everyone's sustenance delivered personally and directly, as is the case with animals and insects where everyone in that kingdom receives sustenance directly. There is no one rich and no one, poor. No one gives to anyone. Everyone dines from nature's own food spread. But, human beings are different. It is to make their system of social living just and to inculcate in them the spirit of mutual help and cooperation, that He makes some of them the medium of delivering sustenance to some others, so that the one who spends gets its reward, and the one who receives becomes grateful to the giver. The reason is that this whole phenomenon of mutual human cooperation and help on which depends the entire functional order of the world can survive only when one person needs the other. A poor person needs the money a rich person has, and a rich person needs the labor of a poor person. Neither of the two is free of the need for the other - and a little reflection would reveal that nobody is doing a favor to anybody. Whatever a person gives to the other person gives, in the ultimate analysis, in one's own interest and for one's own good.

Now, there remains the question: On which basis, did the believers ask the disbelievers to spend in the way of Allah, particularly when they simply did not have the very faith in Allah and, as the jurists maintain, they were no addressees of the subsidiary injunctions of the Sharī'ah? The answer to that is clear. When the believers said that, they had no intention to have disbelievers implement some religious injunction, it was said on the basis of the accepted norm of human good will, sympathy and gentleness.

Verses 48-68

وَيَقُولُونَ مَتٰى هٰذَا الْوَعْدُ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ صٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿٤٨﴾ مَا يَنْظُرُوْنَ اِلَّا

صَيْحَةً وَّاحِدَةً تَأْخُذُهُمْ وَهُمْ يَخِصِّمُوْنَ ﴿٤٩﴾ فَلَا يَسْتَطِيْعُوْنَ
تَوْصِيَةً وَّلَآ اِلٰٓى اَهْلِهِمْ يَرْجِعُوْنَ ﴿٥٠﴾ وَنُفِخَ فِى الصُّوْرِ فَاِذَا هُمْ مِّنَ
الْاَجْدَاثِ اِلٰى رَبِّهِمْ يَنْسِلُوْنَ ﴿٥١﴾ قَالُوْا يٰوَيْلَنَا مَنْۢ بَعَثَنَا مِنْ
مَّرْقَدِنَا ۜ هٰذَا مَا وَعَدَ الرَّحْمٰنُ وَصَدَقَ الْمُرْسَلُوْنَ ﴿٥٢﴾ اِنْ كَانَتْ
اِلَّا صَيْحَةً وَّاحِدَةً فَاِذَا هُمْ جَمِيْعٌ لَّدَيْنَا مُحْضَرُوْنَ ﴿٥٣﴾ فَالْيَوْمَ
لَا تُظْلَمُ نَفْسٌ شَيْـًٔا وَّلَا تُجْزَوْنَ اِلَّا مَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿٥٤﴾ اِنَّ
اَصْحٰبَ الْجَنَّةِ الْيَوْمَ فِىْ شُغُلٍ فٰكِهُوْنَ ﴿٥٥﴾ هُمْ وَاَزْوَاجُهُمْ فِىْ ظِلٰلٍ
عَلَى الْاَرَآئِكِ مُتَّكِـُٔوْنَ ﴿٥٦﴾ لَهُمْ فِيْهَا فَاكِهَةٌ وَّلَهُمْ مَّا يَدَّعُوْنَ ﴿٥٧﴾
سَلٰمٌ قَوْلًا مِّنْ رَّبٍّ رَّحِيْمٍ ﴿٥٨﴾ وَامْتَازُوا الْيَوْمَ اَيُّهَا الْمُجْرِمُوْنَ
﴿٥٩﴾ اَلَمْ اَعْهَدْ اِلَيْكُمْ يٰبَنِىْٓ اٰدَمَ اَنْ لَّا تَعْبُدُوا الشَّيْطٰنَ اِنَّهٗ لَكُمْ
عَدُوٌّ مُّبِيْنٌ ﴿٦٠﴾ وَّاَنِ اعْبُدُوْنِىْ هٰذَا صِرَاطٌ مُّسْتَقِيْمٌ ﴿٦١﴾ وَلَقَدْ
اَضَلَّ مِنْكُمْ جِبِلًّا كَثِيْرًا اَفَلَمْ تَكُوْنُوْا تَعْقِلُوْنَ ﴿٦٢﴾ هٰذِهٖ جَهَنَّمُ
الَّتِىْ كُنْتُمْ تُوْعَدُوْنَ ﴿٦٣﴾ اِصْلَوْهَا الْيَوْمَ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْفُرُوْنَ ﴿٦٤﴾
اَلْيَوْمَ نَخْتِمُ عَلٰٓى اَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَتُكَلِّمُنَآ اَيْدِيْهِمْ وَتَشْهَدُ اَرْجُلُهُمْ بِمَا
كَانُوْا يَكْسِبُوْنَ ﴿٦٥﴾ وَلَوْ نَشَآءُ لَطَمَسْنَا عَلٰٓى اَعْيُنِهِمْ فَاسْتَبَقُوا
الصِّرَاطَ فَاَنّٰى يُبْصِرُوْنَ ﴿٦٦﴾ وَلَوْ نَشَآءُ لَمَسَخْنٰهُمْ عَلٰى مَكَانَتِهِمْ
فَمَا اسْتَطَاعُوْا مُضِيًّا وَّلَا يَرْجِعُوْنَ ﴿٦٧﴾ وَمَنْ نُّعَمِّرْهُ نُنَكِّسْهُ فِى
الْخَلْقِ اَفَلَا يَعْقِلُوْنَ ﴿٦٨﴾

And they say, "When will this promise come true, if you are truthful? " [48] They are looking for nothing but for a single Cry that will seize them when they will be quarreling. [49] So they will not be able to make a bequest, nor will they return to their household. [50] And the Horn will be blown, and suddenly they will be rushing from their graves towards their Lord. [51] They

will say, " Woe to us! Who has raised us from our sleeping place? " This is what the Rahman had promised, and the messengers had told the truth. [52] **It will be no more than a single Cry, and in no time they will all be arraigned before Us.** [53] **Then, nobody will be subjected to injustice in the least, and you will not be recompensed but for what you used to do.** [54] **The people of the Paradise are engaged today in (their) activities, happily enjoying (them).** [55] **They and their spouses are in pleasant shades, reclining on couches.**
[56] **For them there are fruits, and for them there is whatever they ask for.** [57] **"Salam"(Peace upon you) is the word (they receive) from Merciful Lord.** [57] **"And get apart (from the believers) today O the guilty ones.**
[58] **Did I not direct you, O children of 'Adam, that you must not worship the Satan, (because) he is an open enemy for you,** [60] **and that you must worship Me, (because) this is the straight path?** [61] **And he had misguided lot many people from among you. So, did you not have sense?** [62] **(Now) this is the Jahannam of which you were consistently warned.** [63] **Enter it today , because you have been persistently denying (the truth)."** [64] **Today We will set a seal on their mouths, and their hands will speak to Us, and their legs will bear witness about what they used to do.** [65] **And had We willed, We would have wiped out their eyes, and they would have been racing towards the way, but how would they see?** [66] **And had we willed, We would have disfigured them at their places, and they would have not been able to move , nor would they return.** [67] **And whomsoever We give long life, we reverse him in creation. So, do they not have sense?** [68]

Commentary

مَايَنْظُرُوْنَ اِلَّا صَيْحَةً وَّاحِدَةً (They are looking for nothing but for a single Cry that will seize them - 36:49). The question of the disbelievers quoted here is the one they used to ask the Muslims by way of mockery, and the real purpose was to deny the Day of Judgment. It was not asked for finding out the truth, nor as a serious effort to reach the reality. It was simply a way of taunting the Muslims and making fun of them. And even if it were for finding out the true nature of the event, then, the mercy of the Lord of the universe requires that the full and precise knowledge of the year and day of the coming of Qiyāmah should not be given to anyone, so much so that it was not given even to any one from among His noble prophets and

messengers. Even if this question asked by these dimwit people was no more than a fact-finding exercise on their part, it was patently absurd. Therefore, rather than tell them, in response, the time when Qiyāmah will come, they were admonished. They were told that reasonable people, once they become aware of something that is bound to come in all certainty, should start making necessary preparations ahead of it, and not go about wasting precious time in trying to find out its precise hour and day. Common sense required that, once they had heard the foreboding of Qiyāmah, they should have believed and did what it takes to achieve success in that life to come. But, so entangled they are in their heedlessness that they virtually seem to be waiting for nothing short of the time when the day of Qiyāmah comes before them - and then, they would think about it. Therefore, it was said that these people were waiting for the Qiyāmah - while, Qiyāmah will have a scenario of its own, for it would be just one terrible sound of the Horn (Ṣūr) that will seize everyone all of a sudden in a way that people will be busy in their businesses settling their disputes and they all, in this very condition, will lie dead.

It appears in Ḥadīth that two men will be engaged in their activity of buying and selling cloth. Stretched before them will be the yardage of the cloth pieces while, of a sudden, Qiyāmah will come - and they would be unable to complete their deal of cloth. Then, there will be someone else busy plastering his water tank who will fall dead in the same state (reported by Abū Nu'aym from Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ﷺ - al-Qurṭubī).

In verse 50, it was said: فَلَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ تَوْصِيَةً وَّلَآ إِلَىٰٓ أَهْلِهِمْ يَرْجِعُونَ (So they will not be able to make a bequest, nor will they return to their household.), that is, people who are gathered there will not have the respite to make a will among themselves to do something on their behalf, and those who are still outside their houses will not find the respite even to go into their houses. They will lie dead in the very state in which they would be at that time. This is a description of the first blowing of the Horn of the day of Qiyāmah as a result of which the entire gamut of the earth and heavens will be destroyed.

After that, it was said: وَنُفِخَ فِى الصُّوْرِ فَإِذَا هُمْ مِّنَ الْأَجْدَاثِ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ يَنْسِلُونَ (And the Horn will be blown, and suddenly they will be rushing from their graves towards their Lord. (36:51). Here, the word: أَجْدَاث (*ajdāth*) is the plural

form of: جَدَث (*jadath*) which means a grave. And: يَنْسِلُوْنَ (*yansilūn*) is a derivation from: نسلان (*nasalān*) which means to walk swiftly as it appears in another verse: يَخْرُجُوْنَ مِنَ الْاَجْدَاثِ سِرَاعًا (they will come out of their graves in haste - Al-Maʿārij, 71:43). As for what is said in another verse: فَاِذَاهُمْ قِيَامٌ يَّنْظُرُوْنَ (and suddenly, they will stand up, looking around - Az-Zumar, 39:68), it is not contrary to that, for first came the instant of standing up in wonder and then came the act of racing toward the plains of the Resurrection. There is no contradiction in between these two. Then, as it is already proved from the verses of the Qur'ān that the angels will call them to come to the plains of the Resurrection, it becomes clear that the presence of disbelievers on the plain of the Resurrection will not be out of their pleasure, rather, it would be out of compulsion whereby the call of the angels will prompt them to come hastening toward it.

In verse 52, it was said: قَالُوْا يَاوَيْلَنَا مَنْ بَعَثَنَا مِنْ مَّرْقَدِنَا (They will say, "Woe to us! Who has raised us from our sleeping place?"). Though the disbelievers were already having their punishment in their graves with no sign of any relief, yet this punishment will appear as nothing when compared with the punishing circumstances of the day of Qiyāmah, therefore, they will cry out as to why they had to be taken out of their graves, for it would have been better if they had stayed right there. A response to this will come from either the angels or the common believers.

This response appears immediately next in verse 52: هٰذَا مَا وَعَدَ الرَّحْمٰنُ وَصَدَقَ الْمُرْسَلُوْنَ ("This is what the Raḥmān had promised, and the messengers had told the truth.) - to which they paid no attention. At this place, a choice has been made in using the word: رَحْمٰن (Raḥmān: The Most Merciful) out of the many attributes of Allah. It serves as an indicator - as for Him, He had already made elaborate arrangements, in His mercy, that you remain safe from this punishment, and that His act of alerting you in advance through His promise and through His Books and Prophets was, in fact, but a dictate of His attribute of mercy.

Then, in verse 55, it was said: اِنَّ اَصْحٰبَ الْجَنَّةِ الْيَوْمَ فِىْ شُغُلٍ فَاكِهُوْنَ (The people of the Paradise are engaged today in (their) activities, happily enjoying [them]) - 36:55). After having mentioned the worries of the people of Jahannam, described here is the state of the people of Paradise on the day of Qiyāmah that they will be enjoying themselves. The word: فَاكِهُوْنَ (fākihūn) is the plural form of: فَاكِهٌ (*fākih*). It signifies happiness of the

heart as well as happiness out of one's surroundings. As for the expression: فِى شُغُلٍ (fī shugul) appearing before it, it could also mean that they will be totally unaffected by the misfortunes afflicting the people of Jahannam (as said by some commentators).

And then it is also possible that, at this place, this expression: فِى شُغُلٍ (fī shugul) has been added to remove the thought - when, in Jannah, there will be no religious duty like obligatory or necessary worship, nor the job of earning one's livelihood, would this lack of activity not leave one uptight or bored? - hence, it was said that their enjoyment itself will be their principal activity, and the question of any boredom simply does not arise.

Next, in verse 56, it was said: هُمْ وَأَزْوَاجُهُمْ (They and their spouses...). The word: أَزْوَاج (azwāj) as used here includes the Ḥūrs of Jannah as well as wives of the mortal world.

The word: يَدَّعُوْنَ (yadda'ūn) appearing in verse 57: وَلَهُمْ مَّا يَدَّعُوْنَ (wa lahum mā yadda'ūn) is a derivation from: دعوىٰ (da'wah) which means to call, that is, the thing the people of Jannah will call or wish to have, will come to them. The Qur'ān has not used the word: يَسْئَلُوْنَ (yas'alūn: they ask) at this place, because having something after having asked for it is also a sort of exertion, something the Jannah will be free from, in fact, it will be a place where everything needed will be ready and present.

In verse 58, it was said: وَامْتَازُوا الْيَوْمَ اَيُّهَا الْمُجْرِمُوْنَ (And get apart (from the believers) today O the guilty ones.- 36:58) On the plains of the Resurrection, initially when people rise from their graves, they will be scattered all mixed up as said in the Qur'ān: كَاَنَّهُمْ جَرَادٌ مُّنْتَشِرٌ (kaannahum jarādum-muntashir: as if they are scattered locusts - Al-Qamar, 54:7). But, later on, group by group, they will be separated in terms of their deeds - disbelievers at one place and the believers, at another, and sinners at one place and the righteous and the accepted, at another - as it has been stated elsewhere: وَاِذَا النُّفُوْسُ زُوِّجَتْ (And when the persons will be divided into pairs- at-Takwir, 81:7) In the said verse, this same distinction to be made has been described.

In verse 60, it was said: اَلَمْ اَعْهَدْ اِلَيْكُمْ يٰبَنِىْٓ اٰدَمَ اَنْ لَّاتَعْبُدُوا الشَّيْطٰنَ (Did I not direct you, O children of 'Ādam, that you must not worship the Satan, (because) he is an open enemy for you,- 36:60). In other words, this would be said on

the day of Qiyāmah to all human beings, (even to the Jinn). But, the question remains that the disbelievers did not generally worship the Satan. They worshipped idols or other things. Therefore, how does this blame fall on them? The answer is that submitting before some entity in the absolute sense and to obey that entity in word and deed in everything and under all conditions is nothing but worship. Since these people always followed Satanic teachings, therefore, they were called the worshipers of the Satan - as said in Ḥadīth that a person who, driven by love for money or spouse, starts doing everything that would increase wealth or please the spouse, even at the cost of the displeasure of Allah, is an obedient servant of the silver coin and the obedient servant of the spouse (*'Abd-ud-dirham, 'Abd-uz-zawjah*).

In verse 65, it was said: اَلْيَوْمَ نَخْتِمُ عَلٰٓى اَفْوَاهِهِمْ (Today We will set a seal on their mouths). On the day of Resurrection, when comes the time to account for deeds, everyone will be free to offer any excuse one has. But, Mushriks, the practitioners of shirk, those who associate partners in the pristine divinity of Allah Ta'ālā, will declare on oaths that they never had anything to do with *shirk* and *kufr*: وَاللّٰهِ رَبِّنَا مَا كُنَّا مُشْرِكِيْنَ (By Allah, our Lord, we ascribed no partners to Allah - Al-An'am, 6:23).

And some of them will also say that they were free of whatever the angels had written down in their book of deeds. At that time, Allah Ta'ālā will put a seal on their mouths, so that they would not speak. Then, He will give power of speech to their own body parts, the hands and the feet, who will testify to all their deeds as court witnesses against them. As for the present verse, it mentions the speaking of hands and feet only. In another verse, mentioned there is the speaking of one's ear, eye and skin: شَهِدَ عَلَيْهِمْ سَمْعُهُمْ وَاَبْصَارُهُمْ وَجُلُوْدُهُمْ (their ears and their eyes and their skins will testify against them - 41:20). As for what has been said at one place: تَشْهَدُ عَلَيْهِمْ اَلْسِنَتُهُمْ (and their tongues will testify against them - An-Nūr, 24:24), it is not contrary to 'putting a seal on their mouths' because putting a seal means that they will be unable to say anything out of their own volition. Their tongue will speak counter to their personal choice and will testify to the truth.

As for the question how these parts of the body would acquire power of speech, the Qur'ān has already answered that by saying: اَنْطَقَنَا اللّٰهُ الَّذِىْٓ اَنْطَقَ كُلَّ شَىْءٍ (Why did you testify against us? - 41:20) that is, these parts of

the body will say that Allah, who has given power of speech to all things endowed with the ability to speak, has also enabled us to speak.

In the last of the verses cited above, it was said: وَمَنْ نُّعَمِّرْهُ نُنَكِّسْهُ فِى الْخَلْقِ اَفَلَا يَعْقِلُوْنَ (And whomsoever We give long life, we reverse him in creation. Do they then not have sense ?). The word: نُعَمِّر (*nu'ammir*: We give a long life) in this verse has been derived from: تَعْمِير (*ta'mīr*) which means to prolong years of life. And the word: نُنَكِّسْهُ (*nunakkishū*) is a derivation from: تَنْكِيس (*tankīs*) which means to reverse, invert or turn upside down. In this verse, Allah Ta'ālā has described yet another manifestation of His perfect power and eloquent wisdom in that every living being lies under the free will of Allah Ta'ālā all the time. The process of nature is going on. The thing started from a lifeless drop. Wrapped with three layers of darkness in the womb of the mother, that which came to be was this essence of the universe, and a small world in its own right. Countless was the number of most delicate mechanisms that were embedded into its life form. Then it was made to come alive with the infusion of the spirit. After having been nourished and grown for nine months inside the womb of the mother, a perfect human being came into this world. Of course, perfect it was, but the body it had was weak. Nature took care of that by placing in the breast of the mother food that would suit an infant's physical requirement. This gave it the gradual supply of needed energy. From that time to the time of youth, passed many stages and then came a strong body at its total bloom. Then came claims of the power thus acquired and rose the desire to defeat every conceivable adversary.

But, that was not the end. When the creator and master of this new aspirant into the world decided otherwise, all these strengths started waning. Even the decline was not sudden. It took time. There were countless stages. Finally, came the fag end of the years of life. Once there, just imagine, has this person not reached back into the stage of one's childhood. Habits started changing. Reflexes became different. Things that used to be the dearest started appearing hateful. What was comfort once turned into suffering. This is what the Qur'ān calls "*tankīs*," that is, being turned upside down. One trusts what one sees with one's own eyes and what one hears with one's own ears in the life of this world. This too does not remain trustworthy during the later years of old age. Clearly understanding what is being said becomes difficult because one becomes

hard of hearing. The same thing happens to the sense of sight that becomes weak. One cannot see well enough. The classical Arab poet, al-Mutanabbi has said:

ومن صحب الدّنيا طويلا تقلّبتْ......☆......على عينه حتّى يرى صدقها كذبا

And for one who lives long in the world, it will turn upside down right before his eyes to the extent that what he saw as truth will start appearing to be a lie.

Not only that this major change in man's frame of existence is a standing manifestation of the unique power of Allah Ta'ālā, it is also a great favor to him. Is it not that all strengths the supreme Creator has placed in the living presence of man are, in reality, the God-given functional devices issued to him with the clarification that they were neither his property nor were they everlasting and that, finally, they will be taken back from him. This obviously required that, once came the time of such take over, all such strengths should have been taken back simultaneously. But, the most merciful and sublime Lord has not elected to do that. Instead, He has allowed that these strengths be taken back in installments that too are prominently long and spaced apart. Thus, these are taken back gradually, bit by bit, so that one gets alerted and starts getting ready to embark on the ultimate journey of the Hereafter. And Allah knows best.

Verses 69 - 75

وَمَا عَلَّمْنٰهُ الشِّعْرَ وَمَا يَنْبَغِيْ لَهٗ ؕ اِنْ هُوَ اِلَّا ذِكْرٌ وَّقُرْاٰنٌ مُّبِيْنٌ ﴿۶۹﴾
لِّيُنْذِرَ مَنْ كَانَ حَيًّا وَّيَحِقَّ الْقَوْلُ عَلَى الْكٰفِرِيْنَ ﴿۷۰﴾ اَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا اَنَّا
خَلَقْنَا لَهُمْ مِّمَّا عَمِلَتْ اَيْدِيْنَآ اَنْعَامًا فَهُمْ لَهَا مٰلِكُوْنَ ﴿۷۱﴾ وَذَلَّلْنٰهَا
لَهُمْ فَمِنْهَا رَكُوْبُهُمْ وَمِنْهَا يَاْكُلُوْنَ ﴿۷۲﴾ وَلَهُمْ فِيْهَا مَنَافِعُ
وَمَشَارِبُ ؕ اَفَلَا يَشْكُرُوْنَ ﴿۷۳﴾ وَاتَّخَذُوْا مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ اٰلِهَةً لَّعَلَّهُمْ
يُنْصَرُوْنَ ﴿۷۴﴾ لَا يَسْتَطِيْعُوْنَ نَصْرَهُمْ ۙ وَهُمْ لَهُمْ جُنْدٌ مُّحْضَرُوْنَ
﴿۷۵﴾

And We did not teach him (the Holy Prophet) poetry, and it is not proper for him. It is nothing (of that sort) but (it is) an advice and a readable book that explains (the truth), [69] so that it warns him who is alive (to listen to the truth), and so that the word may prove true against the disbelievers. [70] Did they not see that We have created for them cattle, among things made (directly) by Our hands, then they are their owners? [71] And We have brought them under their control, so as some of them are their means of transport, and some of them they eat. [72] And for them there are (other) benefits in them and things to drink. So, would they not be grateful? [73] And they have adopted other gods than Allah, so that they may be helped (by them). [74] They cannot help them, rather they (the disbelievers themselves) are (like) an army brought forth for (protecting) them (the so-called co-gods) [75]

Commentary

In the first verse cited here, it was said: 'وَمَا عَلَّمْنَاهُ الشِّعْرَ وَمَا يَنْبَغِي لَه' (And We did not teach him poetry and it is not proper for him.) Since the deniers of the appearance of a prophet and messenger with a mission could not deny the unique effectiveness of the Qur'ān and its ability to move hearts that was a matter of common experience, therefore, they invented convenient excuses. At times, they would call this Divine Word, some magic and the Holy Prophet ﷺ, a magician. Then, on other occasions, they would say that this Word was poetry and he was a poet. By saying that, they wanted to prove that this unique effectiveness did not come out of the Divine Word as such, instead, they were either words of magic or sorcery that made an impression on hearts, or it is poetic speech for that too affects hearts.

In this verse, Allah Ta'ālā said that He did not teach His prophet the art of poetry, nor was it appropriate to his station and saying that he was a poet, is false and wrong.

Here, we have a question. Is it not that Arabs are a people who have poetry in their blood? Even their women and children would compose impromptu lines of poetry. They knew poetry and its reality. How could they say that the Qur'ān was poetry and the Holy Prophet ﷺ was a poet? On what basis could this be because neither is the Qur'ān restricted by the compulsion of poetic meter, nor of *radīf* (the unchanging word that

appears at the end of the hemistich) and *qāfiyah* (the changing rhymed word that appears before the *radīf*) anywhere in the text? Not even someone who is pathetically ignorant of the mores of poetry would think of calling this poetry.

To answer this, it can be said that, essentially, poetry is composed of self-structured imaginary subjects, whether in poetry or prose. By calling the Qur'ān, poetry and the Holy Prophet ﷺ, a poet their purpose was to tell him that the Divine Word he claims to have brought, is no more than imaginary tales. Or, may be, they called him a poet in terms of the well recognized meaning of poetry with a certain congruity in mind, that is, the effect produced by the Qur'ān is similar to the effect produced by poetic compositions.

Quoting his own chain of authority, Imām Abū Bakr al-Jaṣṣāṣ has reported that someone asked Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضی اللہ عنہا if the Holy Prophet ﷺ used to recite some verse of poetry once in a while. To that, she said, "No, however, he once did recite a verse of Ibn Ṭarfah:

ستبدی لک الایام ماکنت جاھلا......☆...... ویأتیک بالاخبار من لّم تزوّد

"The time will reveal to you that which you did not know, and the news will be brought to you by one whom you did not appointed to do so.

But the holy Prophet ﷺ recited this as: وزن شعری in a manner that broke the poetic measure. Sayyidnā Abū Bakr رضی اللہ عنہ submitted, 'Yā Rasūlallah, this verse is not like that.' He said, 'I am not a poet, nor is poetry appropriate for me.'"

Ibn Kathīr has reported this narration in his Tafsīr, and at-Tirmidhī, an-Nasā'ī and Imām Aḥmad have also reported it. This tells us that he simply did not consider reciting verses of poetry composed by others as appropriate for him. That he would compose it himself was unthinkable. As for some sentences having the resonance of poetic measure reported from the Holy Prophet ﷺ himself, they did not issue forth from him with the intention of composing formal poetry. They were casual, and should some one or two lines issue forth from a person that fall into poetic measure, these do not make him a poet. But, from this natural condition of the Holy Prophet ﷺ that was based on great considerations of wisdom, it does not become necessary that poetry should be taken as blameworthy

in any absolute sense - as explained under the details of injunctions relating to poetry in our commentary on verse 224 of Sūrah Ash-Shu'arā' (26) appearing at its end in Volume VI of Ma'āriful-Qur'ān, English. Those interested may see it there.

In verse 71, it was said: اَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا اَنَّا خَلَقْنَا لَهُمْ مِّمَّا عَمِلَتْ اَيْدِيْنَآ اَنْعَامًا فَهُمْ لَهَا مٰلِكُوْنَ (Did they not see that We have created for them cattle, among things made (directly) by Our hands, then they are their owners?). Along with the mention of the Divine novelty and beneficence in the creation of the cattle in this verse, yet another great favor of Allah Ta'ālā has been identified. It has been said that man has played no role in the creation of these cattle. Allah Ta'ālā made them, exclusively, by His own hands, so to say. Then, He not only let human beings benefit from these cattle with His permission, but also made them their owners, so that they could dispose them off in any manner they chose - use them to their advantage or sell them off and use the money thus acquired.

Gift of God - not capital or labor - is the real wisdom behind the ownership of things

In our day, debate is still going on between various economic theories as to the basis of production of things and their ownership. Is it wealth, or is it labor? The votaries of the capitalist economic system declare capital and wealth as its basis. The protagonists of the socialist and communist system support labor as the real reason or justification behind production of things and their ownership. This decree of the Qur'ān tells us that none of these two has any role to play in the creation of things and their ownership. The creation of anything does not rest in the possession or control of human beings. That is an act of Allah Ta'ālā, directly. Then, reason demands that the one who creates something should also be its owner. Therefore, when it comes to things of this world, the essential and real ownership is that of Allah Ta'ālā. The ownership of human beings in anything whatsoever can take effect only when Allah Ta'ālā passes it on to them in His mercy. Allah Ta'ālā has already revealed the law of the proof and transfer of ownership through his prophets. Counter to this law, no one can become the owner of anything.

In verse 72: وَذَلَّلْنٰهَا لَهُمْ (And We have brought them under their control), yet another favor and blessing has been pointed to. If one were to look at the camel, horse, elephant, ox and other animals, it will be

realized that they are seemingly far stronger than human beings. Man is weak as compared to them - as a result of which, it should have not been possible for him to tame and control them. But, Allah Ta'ālā had it arranged in His own way. The way He created these animals and gifted them to human beings, in the same way, He made these free animals naturally subservient to man. A boy reins a strong horse and rides on its back to anywhere he likes to go. This thing too is no achievement of man. This comes from Allah Ta'ālā as His grace, a blessing that is given to man without asking.

In the last verse cited above (75), it was said: وَهُمْ لَهُمْ جُندٌ مُّحْضَرُونَ (rather they are an army brought forth for them). One sense of this verse is to take the word: جُند (army) in the text to mean an opponent or adversary and take the verse to mean that the things they have made their objects of worship in the mortal world will turn against them on the Day of Judgment and also bear witness against them.

And according to a Tafsir reported from Ḥasan and Qatādah رحمهم الله, it means that these people had taken to idols as gods in the hope that they would help them. But, the reality on the ground proved to be that they were already incapable of helping them. As a result, the very people who used to worship them as their servants and soldiers are now guarding them to the extent that they would take their side and fight against anyone who opposes them (al-Qurṭubī). The translation given in the text (with brackets) is based on this interpretation.

Verses 76 - 83

فَلَا يَحْزُنكَ قَوْلُهُمْ ۘ إِنَّا نَعْلَمُ مَا يُسِرُّونَ وَمَا يُعْلِنُونَ ﴿٧٦﴾ أَوَلَمْ يَرَ
الْإِنسَانُ أَنَّا خَلَقْنَاهُ مِن نُّطْفَةٍ فَإِذَا هُوَ خَصِيمٌ مُّبِينٌ ﴿٧٧﴾ وَضَرَبَ لَنَا
مَثَلًا وَنَسِيَ خَلْقَهُ ۖ قَالَ مَن يُحْيِي الْعِظَامَ وَهِيَ رَمِيمٌ ﴿٧٨﴾ قُلْ
يُحْيِيهَا الَّذِي أَنشَأَهَا أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ ۖ وَهُوَ بِكُلِّ خَلْقٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٧٩﴾ الَّذِي
جَعَلَ لَكُم مِّنَ الشَّجَرِ الْأَخْضَرِ نَارًا فَإِذَا أَنتُم مِّنْهُ تُوقِدُونَ ﴿٨٠﴾
أَوَلَيْسَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ بِقَادِرٍ عَلَىٰ أَن يَخْلُقَ مِثْلَهُم ۚ

بَلٰى ۚ وَهُوَ الْخَلّٰقُ الْعَلِيْمُ ﴿٨١﴾ اِنَّمَآ اَمْرُهٗٓ اِذَآ اَرَادَ شَيْئًا اَنْ يَّقُوْلَ لَهٗ
كُنْ فَيَكُوْنُ ﴿٨٢﴾ فَسُبْحٰنَ الَّذِىْ بِيَدِهٖ مَلَكُوْتُ كُلِّ شَىْءٍ وَّاِلَيْهِ
تُرْجَعُوْنَ ﴿٨٣﴾

So, their remarks must not grieve you. Surely We know what they conceal and what they disclose. [76] And did man not see that We have created him from a drop of semen? Then suddenly he stood as an open adversary (to Us). [77] And he has set up an argument about Us and forgot his creation. He said, "Who will give life to the bones when they are decayed?" [78] Say, "These will be revived by the same One who had created them for the first time, and who is fully aware about every creation, [79] – the One who created for you fire from the green tree, and in no time you kindle from it." [80] Is it that the One who has created the heavens and the earth has no power to create ones like them? Why not? And He is the Supreme Creator, the All-Knowing. [81] His practice, when He intends to do something, is no more than He says, "Be", and it comes to be. [82] So, pure (from every fault) is the One in whose hand is the dominion of all things. And towards Him you are to be returned . [83]

Commentary

The last five verses of Sūrah Yā Sīn were revealed in the background of a particular event. This event has been attributed to Ubayy Ibn Khalaf in some narrations, and to 'Āṣ ibn Wā'il in some others. And there is no improbability in that such an event came to pass with both of them. The first narration was reported by al-Baihaqī in Shu'abul-'Imān, and the other reported by Ibn Abī Ḥāatim from Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ says that 'Āṣ Ibn Wā'il picked up a bone from the sandy and pebble-strewn valley of Makkah and after breaking it with his hands rubbed it into a handful of bone meal and then said to the Holy Prophet ﷺ, "Will Allah revive this bone you are seeing in my hands?" The Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "Yes, Allah Ta'ālā will put you to death, then bring you back to life and then He will put you in Hell." (Ibn Kathīr)

The expression: خَصِيْمٌ مُّبِيْنٌ (an open adversary) in verse 77 means that this man was created from a lowly drop, yet he has the audacity to

challenge Allah, and refuse to accept His power. In verse 78, it was said: ضَرَبَ لَنَا مَثَلاً (And he has set up an argument about Us). Here, the expression refers to the event described above, that is, while smashing and rubbing the bone into bone meal, its revival was considered improbable. After that, it was said: وَنَسِیَ خَلْقَه (and forgot his own creation). It means while he was giving that example, he forgot the example of his own creation as to how he himself was created by infusing life in a lowly, impure and lifeless drop - a bland anatomy of his creation indeed. Had he not forgotten his real genetic origin, he would have never come up with such examples and would have never dared saying no to Divine power.

In verse 80, it was said: جَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِّنَ الشَّجَرِ الْاَخْضَرِ نَارًا (the One who created for you fire from the green tree .). Two trees used to be well known in 'Arabia - Markh (Cynanchum Vinimale) and 'Afār. The Arabs were accustomed to cutting two twigs from these two trees as they did with *siwāk* or *miswāk*. These twigs would be solid, green, and full of fresh water inside. By rubbing one on the other, it worked like firestone. They could strike fire out of these. This is what has been alluded to in striking fire out of the green tree. (Qurṭubī) And if we were to consider the ultimate fate of trees, every green tree that flourishes initially, then, later on, once dried, it becomes a source of fuel and fire. Seen from this angle, every tree can be meant here - as seems to be the sense in the following verse of the noble Qur'ān: اَفَرَءَيْتُمُ النَّارَ الَّتِیْ تُوْرُوْنَ ءَ اَنْتُمْ اَنْشَاْتُمْ شَجَرَتَهَاۤ اَمْ نَحْنُ الْمُنْشِئُوْنَ (Now tell Me about the fire you kindle: Is it you who have originated its tree, are We the Orginiator? - 56:71, 72).

But, in the present verse, since the quality of the 'shajar' or tree has also been mentioned as being 'akhdar' or green, therefore, here it seems that meant here are those particular trees that used to be a source of fire despite being green and moisturized.

In verse 82, it was said: اِنَّمَاۤ اَمْرُهٗۤ اِذَاۤ اَرَادَ شَیْـًٔا اَنْ یَّقُوْلَ لَهٗ كُنْ فَیَكُوْنُ (His practice, when He intends to do something, is no more than He says, "Be", and it comes to be.). In other words, the verse means that when Allah Ta'ālā intends to create something, He has no need to follow the way things are made by human beings who have to collect raw materials, assemble technicians and work for a certain period of time until the thing is ready. His way, to use an understatement, is different. Whenever, He intends to create something, for Him it is sufficient to give the command: "Be." Right

then, the thing so commanded comes into existence. From this, it does not necessarily follow that the creation of everything should invariably be instant. Instead, when the creation of something instantly under the dictate of the wisdom of the Creator is expedient, it stands created on the beam without any gradual mode or respite. And when the creation of something is decreed to be appropriate only as gradual due to some wise consideration, it comes into existence gradually - whether it is destined to be created along with a particular gradual mode in the very first decree, or it is addressed with a separate command of '*kun*' or 'be' at each gradual stage. وَاللّٰه سبحانهٗ وتعالٰی اعلم (And Allah, the Pure, the High knows best).

Alḥamdulillāh

The Commentary on

Sūrah Yā Sīn

Ends here

Sūrah Aṣ-Ṣaffāt

Sūrah Aṣ-Ṣaffat is Makki and it has 182 verses and 5 sections

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1- 10

وَالصّٰٓفّٰتِ صَفًّا ﴿١﴾ فَالزّٰجِرٰتِ زَجْرًا ﴿٢﴾ فَالتّٰلِيٰتِ ذِكْرًا ﴿٣﴾ اِنَّ
اِلٰهَكُمْ لَوَاحِدٌ ﴿٤﴾ رَبُّ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا وَرَبُّ
الْمَشَارِقِ ﴿٥﴾ اِنَّا زَيَّنَّا السَّمَآءَ الدُّنْيَا بِزِيْنَةِ ۨالْكَوَاكِبِ ﴿٦﴾
وَحِفْظًا مِّنْ كُلِّ شَيْطٰنٍ مَّارِدٍ ﴿٧﴾ لَا يَسَّمَّعُوْنَ اِلَى الْمَلَاِ الْاَعْلٰى
وَيُقْذَفُوْنَ مِنْ كُلِّ جَانِبٍ ﴿٨﴾ دُحُوْرًا وَّلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ وَّاصِبٌ ﴿٩﴾
اِلَّا مَنْ خَطِفَ الْخَطْفَةَ فَاَتْبَعَهٗ شِهَابٌ ثَاقِبٌ ﴿١٠﴾

(I swear) by those who stand in rows, [1] then by those who prevent firmly [2], then by those who recite the *dhikr,* [3] surely your God is but One, [4] the Lord of the heavens and the earth and what is between them, and Lord of the points of the sunrise. [5] Verily, We have decorated the nearest sky with an adornment, the stars, [6] and (have made them) a security against every rebellious shaitan (satan). [7] They cannot listen to the Upper Realm and are hit from every side [8] to be driven off, and for them there is a lasting punishment, [9] however, if one snatches a little bit, he is pursued by a bright flame. [10]

Commentary

Subjects of the Sūrah

This Sūrah is Makkī, that is, it was revealed in Makkah

al-Mukarramah. Like other Makkī Sūrahs, matters of faith have been taken up as its essential subject. In it, beliefs about Divine Oneness, the mission of messengers and the certain eventuality of the Hereafter have been fortified with proofs presented in various ways. As a corollary, a refutation of the beliefs of Mushriks as well as the scenes of Paradise and Hell also appear in the Sūrah. After providing rational support for beliefs that formed part of the call of the noble prophets عليهم السلام and after removing doubts and objections raised by disbelievers, the Sūrah describes how Allah Ta'ālā dealt with those who embraced these beliefs in the past and what was the fate of those who opted to take the road to denial and disbelief? Accordingly, in that wise, events relating to Sayyidnā Nūḥ, Ibrāhīm, Mūsā, Hārūn, Ilyās, Lūṭ and Yūnus عليهم السلام have been mentioned, briefly at some places and in details at others.

The Mushriks of Makkah used to call angels: Daughters of God. Towards the end, this belief has been refuted in details and an overall view of the Sūrah seems to indicate that the refutation of this particular kind of *shirk* (ascribing partners to the Divinity of Allah by declaring angels to be the daughters of God) has been kept in marked sight. Therefore, the Sūrah has been initiated with an oath taken in the name of angels combined with a declaration of the attributes of their servitude. والله سبحانه اعلم (And Allah, who is Pure, knows best).

Tauḥīd: The Oneness of Allah is the first subject

The Sūrah has been initiated by a description of the belief in Tauḥīd, the Oneness of Allah and the real purpose of the first four verses is to state: إِنَّ إِلٰهَكُمْ لَوَاحِدٌ (surely your God is but One - 37:4). But, before this is asserted, three oaths are sworn ahead of it. A simple literal translation of these oaths is given below: "(I swear) by those who stand in rows, [1] then by those who prevent firmly [2], then by those who recite the *dhikr*.

Who are these people identified as "those who stand in rows," then, "those who prevent firmly" and then, "those who recite the dhikr?" There is no clarification in the words of the noble Qur'ān about it. Therefore, different views have been expressed to explain it. Some respected commentators say that these refer to living warriors who come out to wage Jihad in the way of Allah and who stand in rows after rows, so that they prevent the aggression of the forces of the false, and even when they file in readiness for combat, even then, they remain engaged in dhikr,

tasbih and the recitation of the Qur'ān as well.

Some others have said that they mean the performers of prayers who stand in rows in the Masjid and prevent Satanic thoughts denying access to them by means of a total concentration on dhikr and the recitation of the Qur'ān (Tafsīr Kabīr and Qurṭubī). Other than these, there are some explanations that do not bear much congruity with the actual words of the Qur'ān.

But, the Tafsīr or explanation which found the widest acceptance with the majority of commentators was that the reference here is to angels, and given here are three attributes credited to them:

1. The first attribute is: اَلصّٰفّٰتِ صَفًّا (those who stand in rows). This expression comes from the word: صَفّ (*ṣaff*) and it means 'to align some group on a straight line' (Qurṭubī). Thus, it means precisely as it has been translated above.

That the angels stand in the formation of rows has also been mentioned later in this very Sūrah: وَاِنَّا لَنَحْنُ الصَّآفُّوْنَ (and We, surely We are those who stand in rows - 37:165). When are these rows formed? In answer to that, some respected commentators - such as, Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās, Ḥasan al-Baṣrī and Qatādah - have said that angels are always standing in their rows in space awaiting the command of their Lord, and when it comes, they carry it out (Maẓharī). Some others particularize it with the time of worship, that is, when the angels are engaged in *'ibādah,* dhikr and tasbih (worship, remembrance and glorification of Allah), they are in a row formation (Tafsīr Kabīr).

Discipline is desirable in Islam

From this verse, we learn that doing everything in an organized and disciplined manner and giving due consideration to order and skill in whatever we do is something expected of us and is certainly liked by Allah Ta'ālā;. It is obvious that the two objectives of the worship of Allah Ta'ālā and the implementation of His command might have as well been achieved if the angels, rather than form rows, could have assembled in the form of a disorganized mob. But, instead of being subjected to something so haphazard, they were given the taufiq or ability to make rows. Then, by mentioning this very attribute first out of their good attributes in this verse, it was pointed out that Allah Ta'ālā likes this style

of propriety very much.

The importance of making rows come straight and right in Ṣalāh

So this is not for angels only. Human beings too have been induced to and bound with the need to make their rows straight and right during *'ibādah'*. According to a narration of Sayyidnā Jābir Ibn Samurah ﷺ, the Holy Prophet ﷺ said to him and those with him, "Why do you not align yourself in perfect rows (while offering Ṣalāh) as do the angels before their Lord?" The Ṣaḥābah asked, 'How do the angels form their rows before their Lord?' He said, "They complete the rows and stand compactly (that is, leave no gap in between the row)." (Tafsīr Maẓharī)

So many *aḥādīth* stressing on the need to make rows complete and keep them straight in Ṣalāh have appeared that they could fill an independent treatise on the subject. Sayyidnā Abū Mas'ūd al-Badrī ﷺ says that the Holy Prophet ﷺ would touch our shoulders with his blessed hand during Ṣalāh and say, "Stand straight, do not step ahead or fall behind, other wise, it will cause dissension to creep up in your hearts." (Jam' al-Fawa'id, with reference to Muslim and an-Nasā'ī, p. 91, v.1)

2. The second attribute of the angels has been described as: فَالزّٰجِرٰتِ زَجْرًا (*fazzajirāti zajran*: those who prevent firmly). This word has been derived from زَجْر (*zajr*) which means to hold in check, block, prevent or restrain, also to drive back, repel or reprimand. Maulana Thanavi has translated it in the sense of those who place an impregnable check - which comprehends every possible sense of the word. Now, what is that against which the angels place their check? In view of the context of the Holy Qur'ān, most commentators have answered it by saying that the enforcing of check at this place means the act of angels through which they stop the satans from reaching the higher levels, and a detailed description of which is going to appear a little later in the Qur'ān itself.

3. The third attribute is: فَالتّٰلِيٰتِ ذِكْرًا (*fattaliati dhikran*) that is, these angels are those who recite the *'dhikr'*. The core sense of *'dhikr'* is 'word of good counsel' as well as 'the remembrance of Allah.' In the first instance, it would mean that these angels are those who recite everything Allah Ta'ālā has revealed as word of good counsel through Scriptures. And this recitation could be as a means of earning *barakah* and also as an act of *''ibādah'*. Then, it is also possible that it means the angels who

bring wahy (revelation) to the prophets, since they recite these Scriptures carrying good counsel before the prophets عليهم السلام and thus they convey the message of Allah to them. And in the second instance, if *'dhikr'* were to be taken to mean the remembrance of Allah, then, it would mean that they keep busy reciting those words, words that prove their commitment to the glory and sanctity of Allah.

At this place, by mentioning these three attributes of angels, the noble Qur'ān has put together all essential qualities of ideal servitude. To sum up: (1) Stand in perfect linear formation for *''ibādah',* (2) preventing rebellious forces from disobedience to Allah and (3) to recite the good counsel and commandments of Allah in person as well as to communicate to others. It is obvious that no act of servitude can remain devoid of these three departments. Hence, the sense of all four verse (37:1-4) turns out to be: 'By the angels who imbibe in them all ideal attributes of servitude, your true Lord is but One.'

Why has the statement been sworn by the angels?

The reason why angels have been sworn by in the Sūrah particularly - as already submitted - lies in the central theme of this Sūrah. It aims at refuting the peculiar kind of shirk (ascribing of partners in the pure divinity of Allah) based on which the people of Makkah used to call angels the daughters of Allah. Accordingly, at the very beginning of the Sūrah, by swearing in the name of the angels, described there were their unique attributes that demonstrated their perfect servitude. In other words, the sense is that should you ponder over these angelic attributes of servitude, they will themselves become a witness before you that their relationship with Allah Ta'ālā is not that of a father and daughter, instead, it is that of servants and the Master.

Injunctions about sworn statement of Allah Ta'ālā: Three questions and their answers

In the noble Qur'ān, there are statement in which Allah Ta'ālā has sworn in various ways in order to lay emphasis on many matters of principles relating to faith and its articles. At some places, it is that of His own Being while, at other places, it is that of particular things out of what He has created. This raises many questions. Therefore, it has become a detailed issue in the science of the Tafsīr (exegesis) of the noble Qur'ān. Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Qaiyyim has written a regular book on the subject entitled التبيان

فی احکام القرآن at-Tibyan fi Aqsam-il- Qur'ān. 'Allāmah as-Suyūṭī has, in his book الاتقان al-Itqān on the principle of Tafsīr has discussed it in details in the sixty-seventh category of discussions. Some necessary components are being given here:

Question One: When Allah Ta'ālā makes a sworn statement, a question naturally arises: Is it not that Allah Ta'ālā is the most need free of all? Why would he need to strengthen His statement with an oath in order to make someone believe?

Abulqasim al-Qushairi has answered to this question by saying that Allah needs not to swear before anyone, but His compassion towards His servants invited Him to do so in the hope that they, after hearing such a sworn statement made by Allah Ta'ālā, may tend to accept the truth and save themselves from the punishment. When an Arab bedouin heard the verse وَفِي السَّمَآءِ رِزْقُكُمْ وَمَا تُوْعَدُوْنَ. فَوَرَبِّ السَّمَآءِ وَالْاَرْضِ اِنَّهٗ لَحَقٌّ (And in heaven is your provision, and that you are promised, it is surely true as that you have speech - 51:22-23) where Allah Ta'ālā has sworn by 'the Lord of the heavens and the earth', he remarked, "Who has annoyed the Almighty to make Him swear an oath?"

In short, as said earlier, this is something necessitated by Divine compassion for His creation. Is it not that we have with us a recognized method of settling disagreements and differences? A witness is presented to support a claim. If there is no witness, a sworn statement is offered. Similarly, Allah Ta'ālā has elected to go by this familiar way of human beings in their interest. On occasions, He has laid stress on the subject by using the word: شَهَادَت (witness) as in: شَهِدَ اللّٰهُ اَنَّهٗ لَآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا هُوَ (Allah bears witness that there is no god but He - And [so do] the angels and the men of knowledge - 'Al-'Imrān, 3:18). Then, there are occasions when words of oath have been used as in: اِیْ وَرَبِّیْٓ اِنَّهٗ لَحَقٌّ (Yes, by my Lord, it is true - Yūnus, 10:53).

Question Two: When it comes to taking an oath, it is usually done in the name of someone comparatively higher, bigger or more significant. But, how is it that Allah Ta'ālā has sworn by things in His creation that are inferior to Him in all conceivable respects?

It can be answered by saying that there simply is, nor can there be, any being or entity greater than Allah Ta'ālā. When so, it is obvious that

the oath of Allah Ta'ālā cannot be like that of the common creation. Therefore, on occasions, *Allah subhānahu wa Ta'ālā* has sworn by His own pristine Being as in: إِيْ وَرَبِّيْ (Yes, by my Lord - 10:53). Then, there are seven places in the Qur'ān where oaths are sworn by Allah Himself. Then there are other places where oaths are sworn by Divine acts or attributes and the Qur'ān itself, for example: وَالسَّمَآءِ وَمَا بَنٰهَا، وَالْاَرْضِ وَمَا طَحٰهَا، وَنَفْسٍ وَّمَا سَوّٰهَا (And by the sky, and One who built it, and by the earth, and the One who spread it, and by the soul, and who made it well - ash-Shams, 91:5-7). And most of such oaths relate to the objects of creation that, being the means of recognition of Allah, do but revert back to Allah Himself as the ultimate source of all creation. (as mentioned by Ibn-ul- Qayyim)

Out of the things in creation that have been sworn by, at places, the purpose is to highlight the sublimity of that particular thing, as is the case with an oath by the blessed life of the Holy Prophet ﷺ in the Holy Qur'ān by saying: لَعَمْرُكَ اِنَّهُمْ لَفِيْ سَكْرَتِهِمْ يَعْمَهُوْنَ (By your life [O prophet], they are wandering blindly in their intoxication [misguidance] - al-Ḥijr, 15:72). Ibn Marduwayh reports the saying of Sayyidnā 'Abdullah Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه that Allah Ta'ālā has not created anyone or anything in this world more sublime and esteemed than the Holy Prophet ﷺ himself, and it is for this reason that no oath by the person of any prophet or messenger appears anywhere in the entire Qur'ān. The only such oath being by the blessed life of the Holy Prophet ﷺ appears in the verse mentioned here. Similarly, the two oaths in: وَالطُّوْرِ (By the Mount - at-Ṭūr, 52:1) and وَكِتٰبٍ مَّسْطُوْرٍ (By the Written Book - at-Ṭūr, 52:2) appear there to highlight the greatness of the two objects sworn by.

And on occasions, a certain created object has been sworn by for the reason that it yields a lot of benefits as in: وَالتِّيْنِ وَالزَّيْتُوْنِ (By the fig, and the olive - at-Tīn, 95:1). And there are other occasions where some created object has been sworn by for the reason that its creation is the manifestation of the great power of Allah Ta'ālā, and an important source of getting to know the Master-Creator of the universe. And in most cases, the thing sworn by does have some role to play in proving the subject stressed with the force of an oath. This unveils itself with a little deliberation wherever it occurs.

Question Three: For human beings in general, the well-known rule of the Sharī'ah is that swearing by anyone other than Allah Ta'ālā is not

permissible. This poses a question: Is it not that the statements sworn by Allah Ta'ālā in the name of His own created objects go on to prove that a statement sworn in the name of someone other than Allah will also become permissible for others as well? This has been answered by Ḥasan al-Baṣrī by saying:

إِنَّ اللّٰهَ يقسم بما شاء من خلقه وليس لاحد ان يقسم الّا باللّٰه

(رواه ابن ابی حاتم از مظهری)

Surely, Allah Ta'ālā has the right to swear by whatever of His creation He wills, but it is not for anyone else to swear by anyone other than Allah (reported by Ibn Abī Ḥātim, as in Maẓharī).

Here, the core sense is that taking one's own self on the analogy of the most-exalted Allah is wrong and false. Once the Divine Law has prohibited swearing by anyone other than Allah in the case of human beings at large, any effort to counter argue on the basis of what He elects to do on His own, simply cannot be anything but false.

Explanation of verses

Turning to the explanation of the verses cited above, we see that the statement: معبود برحق (Verily, your God is but One - 4) has been placed at the end of the first three verses in which oaths by angels are sworn. Though, during the course of these oaths, mentioned therein are particular attributes of angels that, if deliberated upon even in a modest measure, would turn out to be nothing short of initial proofs of the belief in Tauḥīd, the Oneness of Allah. But , in the six verses that follow next, a standing proof of Tauḥīd has also been supplied.

It was said: رَبُّ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا وَرَبُّ الْمَشَارِقِ (the Lord of the heavens and the earth and what is between them, and Lord of the points of the sunrise. - 37:5). Now, a Being to whom goes the credit of having created and sustained such a mind-boggling range of creations has to be the One most deserving of ownership. And this entire universe is a positive proof of His existence and Oneness. The word: اَلْمَشَارِق (*al-mashāriq*) as used here is the plural form of مَشْرِق *mashriq* or East. Since, the sun rises from a new point every day of the year, therefore, its orientations in the East are many, and it is on this basis that the plural form has been employed here.

In the next verse, it was said: اِنَّا زَيَّنَّا السَّمَآءَ الدُّنْيَا بِزِيْنَةِ اِلْكَوَاكِبِ (Verily, We

have decorated the nearest sky with an adornment, the stars, - 37:6). Here, the expression: اَلسَّمَاءَ الدُّنْيَا (*as-sama'ud-dunyā*: the nearest sky) means the closest sky. The sense is that Allah Ta'ālā has made this sky closest to the world look good through the glittering presence of stars. Now, it is not necessary that these stars are located precisely within the sky. In fact, even if they are detached from it, even then, should they be looked at from the earth, they appear to be on the sky - and keep imparting a glow to it. What is being said here is no more but that this star spangled sky is an open proof of the fact that it did not come into existence on its own, instead, it has been created by its creator. And why a Being that can bring such enormous things into existence would need any partner and sharer in His creation? In addition to that, when even the disbelievers find it a settled matter that Allah Ta'ālā is the creator of all heavenly bodies, would it not be injustice that, despite His being the Creator and Master, someone or something else be taken as the object of worship? As for the problem of stars being part of the sky or being separate from it in the light of the Qur'ān as well as that of the coherence of astronomy with the noble Qur'ān, these have been taken up in detail in the commentary on Sūrah al-Ḥijr (Ma'āriful-Qur'ān, Volume V, Verses 15:16, page 302)

In the last four verses, (37:7-10): وَحِفْظًا مِّنْ كُلِّ شَيْطٰنٍ مَّارِدٍ (الى قوله تعالى) فَاَتْبَعَهٗ شِهَابٌ ثَاقِبٌ and [have made them] a security against every rebellious shaitan [satan]. They cannot listen to the Upper Realm and are hit from every side, to be driven off, and for them there is a lasting punishment, (however, if one snatches a little bit, he is pursued by a bright flame - 37:10). It has been said that stars have yet another benefit besides being a decoration of the sky. Through these, wicked Satans are restrained from approaching the higher levels to eavesdrop. They do that to gather whatever news of the unseen they can gather by reaching the fringes of the sky. But, they are denied the opportunity to listen to what angels say to each other. If some Satan picks up even a part of their conversation, and tries to decamp with it, he is hit by a blazing flame, so that he remains unable to pass on this information to his devotees among soothsayers in the world. It is this blazing flame that has been called: شِهَابٌ ثَاقِب (*shihāb thāqib*: meteor).

Some details about meteors have appeared in Sūrah al-Ḥijr

(Ma'āriful-Qur'ān, volume V. 15:17,18, pages 303-305). At this place, it should be borne in mind that early Greek scientists believed in meteors being terrestrial substance that rose up with vapors and would burn up when it reached the fire zone. But, the words of the Qur'ān, as they appear here, seem to suggest that a meteor is not some terrestrial substance, rather, is something generated only in the upper atmosphere. At this stage, earlier commentators have been saying all along that the Greek assumption about meteors - that it was some terrestrial substance - was no more than a conjecture. Therefore, this cannot be used to raise an objection against the Qur'ān. As for the other possibility - that some terrestrial substance rises up and ignites itself in the upper atmosphere - that too offers no contradiction with the Qur'ān.

But, once we are in the age of modern scientific discoveries, the question has been put to rest. Astronomers tell us that meteors (*shihāb thāqib*) are small pieces from countless stars, generally of the size of large bricks. They stay in space. One of their groups is known as *'asadiyyah'*, (Leo, or Lion, out of the signs of Zodiac). It keeps revolving around the sun on its path through the imaginary belt in the heavens. One orbit by it is completed in thirty-three years. Light is emitted in these pieces because of their speed and abrasion against heavenly bodies. These pieces fall mostly during the nights of August 10 and November 27. Then, during the nights of April 20, October 18 and November 28, and on the nights of December 6, 9 and 13, their fallings tapers off. (Tafsīr al-Jawahir by Ṭanṭawī, page 15, volume 8).

This investigative approach of modern science corresponds to the Qur'ānic description. Yes, as for people who take the phenomena of satans being hit by meteors beyond conception, the late Tantawi has offered a good advice for them in his Tafsīr al-Jawahir. He has said:

> "Our forebears and scholars also took it with a heavy heart that the noble Qur'ān would say something counter to contemporary astronomy of their time. But, the commentators of the Qur'ān did not compromise their position. They did not agree to accept their thinking and surrender the position of the Qur'ān. Instead of doing something like that, they bypassed their philosophical assumptions and continued to stay with the Qur'ān. After the passage of some time, it became automatically established that the early Greeks were wrong in their assumptions. Now, if we

were to acknowledge that these stars hit, hurt and burn satans, what is there to stop us from doing so? Thus, here we are in our time embracing this statement of the Qur'ān as true. And we are faithfully waiting for the future (when science will also confirm it)." - al-Jawahir, page 14, volume 8.

The Real Objective

At this place, by mentioning the skies, the stars and the meteors, two objectives have been achieved. The first real objective is to assert the Oneness of Allah who has, all by Himself, created and managed a universal system so magnificent and, therefore, He alone is worthy of being worshipped as well. Then, there is the second objective whereby the false notion of those who take satans as their objects of worship has been refuted by telling them that they are the most accursed of the creation, and have nothing to do with the supreme station of godhead.

In addition to that, also refuted here is the objection of those who used to degrade the Divine revelation (*waḥy*) sent to the Holy Prophet ﷺ as the predictions of the soothsayers. These verses clearly indicate that the noble Qur'ān rejects the soothsayers for the sum-total of their information is what they receive through the satans. And the Qur'ān says that the satans do not have access to the higher echelons. They cannot bring back the true information out of what remains in the realm of the Unseen (*alghayb*). When the Qur'ān states this as its creed relating to soothsaying, how can it become soothsaying as such? Thus, these verses carry clear hints to the subject of Allah's Oneness and the veracity of the mission of the prophet. Later on, through the example of these very cosmic creations, the belief in the Hereafter has been proved.

Verses 11 - 18

فَاسْتَفْتِهِمْ اَهُمْ اَشَدُّ خَلْقًا اَمْ مَّنْ خَلَقْنَا ؕ اِنَّا خَلَقْنٰهُمْ مِّنْ طِيْنٍ
لَّازِبٍ ﴿١١﴾ بَلْ عَجِبْتَ وَيَسْخَرُوْنَ ﴿١٢﴾ وَاِذَا ذُكِّرُوْا لَا يَذْكُرُوْنَ
﴿١٣﴾ وَاِذَا رَاَوْا اٰيَةً يَّسْتَسْخِرُوْنَ ﴿١٤﴾ وَقَالُوْٓا اِنْ هٰذَآ اِلَّا سِحْرٌ
مُّبِيْنٌ ﴿١٥﴾ ءَاِذَا مِتْنَا وَكُنَّا تُرَابًا وَّعِظَامًا ءَاِنَّا لَمَبْعُوْثُوْنَ ﴿١٦﴾
اَوَاٰبَآؤُنَا الْاَوَّلُوْنَ ﴿١٧﴾ قُلْ نَعَمْ وَاَنْتُمْ دَاخِرُوْنَ ﴿١٨﴾

Now ask them, "Are they stronger in the formation of their bodies, or those (other beings) We have created?" Certainly, We did create them from sticky clay. [11] **But you wonder (at their denial), and they mock (at the idea of an Hereafter).** [12] **And when any advice is given to them, they pay no heed to it.** [13] **And when they see a sign, they make fun of it,** [14] **and say, "This is nothing but an open magic.** [15] **Is it when we have died and become dust and bones, that we shall be raised again,** [16] **and even our fathers of a foretime?"** [17] **Say, "Yes - and you shall be disgraced (too)!"** [18]

Commentary

After having proved the belief in the Oneness of Allah, described in the present eight verses is the belief in the 'Ākhirah or Hereafter along with an answer to doubts entertained by disbelievers about it. First of all, a rational proof has been given in support of the possibility of human resurrection in the very initial verse cited above. In gist, it refers to the huge heavenly bodies of the universe mentioned in previous verses, and points out to the obvious weakness of human beings as compared to them. Now when disbelievers do recognize that such great objects of creation as angels, Moon, stars, Sun and the meteors, were created by Allah Ta'ālā through His infinite power, how could it become difficult for Him to make a weak creation like human beings die and then come alive once again? It is being said that the way they were fashioned in the beginning with sticky clay followed by a blowing of spirit in them, similarly, when they will have died and become dust, even then, Allah Ta'ālā will give them life once again.

As for the statement: (Certainly, We did create them from sticky clay - 37:11), either it means that their forefather, Sayyidnā Adam عليه السلام, was created with clay, or it is also possible that it means every human being. Therefore, if seen with a little deliberation, water-based clay is the essence of every human being cyclically. Human creation is from sperm, sperm from blood and blood from food. The essence of food, no matter in which form, is vegetation and vegetation comes from the combination of clay and water.

Anyway, the first verse (11) provides a rational proof of the belief in the 'Ākhirah or Hereafter. This has been posed in the form of a question beamed right at them: Who is more difficult in the process of creation?

You? Or, are the many objects of creation We have mentioned more difficult to create? Therefore, no elaborate explanation was considered necessary. It was deemed sufficient to allude to it through a hint by saying - 'Certainly, We did create them with sticky clay.'

After that, in the five verses that follow it, described there is the reaction the disbelievers show on hearing the proofs in support of the Hereafter. The proofs of the belief in the Hereafter presented before disbelievers were of two kinds: (1) Rational proofs as given in the first verse. (2) Reported proofs, that is, they were shown miracles in support of the veracity of the mission of the Holy Prophet ﷺ as prophet and messenger of Allah asserting that he was, as such, from Allah and a prophet of Allah can never lie. He receives the authority of what he says from the heavens. And when he is telling us that the last day of Qiyāmah will come, there will be a Resurrection and human beings will account for their deeds, then, this information given by him is definitely true, and it must be accepted as true.

As for the reaction of disbelievers on rational proofs, it was said: بَلْ عَجِبْتَ وَيَسْخَرُوْنَ. وَاِذَا ذُكِّرُوْا لَايَذْكُرُوْنَ (But you wonder [at their denial], and they mock [at the idea of an Hereafter]. And when any advice is given to them, they pay no heed to it. - 12,13). Given here first is the stance of the Holy Prophet ﷺ who wonders as to how could these people, after having such clear proofs before them, still remain reluctant to accept the truth while these people, on the contrary, indulge in making fun of the proofs and beliefs presented by him before them. In fact, no amount of advice and counsel given to them works. They are just averse to any understanding.

As for reported proofs, their reaction is: وَاِذَا رَاَوْا اٰيَةً يَّسْتَسْخِرُوْنَ (And when they see a sign, they make a fun of it - 37:14). It means if they see a miracle that confirms the veracity of his prophethood, and the belief in 'Ākhirah ultimately, they ridicule even something so serious and dismiss it by saying that it was nothing but clear magic. Why would they so scoff and jeer? Did they have some basis, some argument in support?

They did and it was: ءَ اِذَا مِتْنَا وَكُنَّا تُرَابًا وَّعِظَامًا ءَ اِنَّا لَمَبْعُوْثُوْنَ اَوَاٰبَآؤُنَا الْاَوَّلُوْنَ (Is it when we have died and become dust and bones, that we shall be raised again, and even our fathers of a foretime?"- 16,17). In other words, the problem of comprehension that confronted them was as to how in the

world could they - once they and their forefathers had become dust and bones - be brought back to life all over again. They were really not willing to admit any proof in this matter, neither that of reason nor that of miracle. Allah Ta'ālā has chosen to answer their question in a single sentence at the end in the words: قُلْ نَعَمْ وَاَنْتُمْ دَاخِرُوْنَ (Say, "Yes - and you shall be disgraced (too)!" - 37:18)

Outwardly, this is a dismissive answer, as is usually given to rigid people. But, a little deliberation would reveal that it happens to be a full-fledged argument as well. Imām Rāzī has explained it in Tafsīr Kabīr. He says: By the rational proof of resurrection given earlier, it already stands established that the rising of human beings once again after death is not something impossible. Then, the rule is that the physical happening of anything rationally possible can be proved on the authority of the statement of someone who is harbinger of nothing but the truth. So, once this much is settled that rising again is possible, then, should some true prophet of Allah simply say thereafter: 'Yes, you shall definitely rise again," this will be an absolute proof that the said event is bound to happen.

The proof of the miracles of the Holy Prophet ﷺ

The word: آیة ('āyatan) in verse 14: وَاِذَا رَاَوْا اٰيَةً (And when they see a sign) literally means 'sign' and at this place it means 'miracle.' Hence, this verse proves that Allah Ta'ālā had given to the Holy Prophet ﷺ some other miracles as well in addition to that of the noble Qur'ān - which refutes those who take the miracles of the Holy Prophet ﷺ as effects of physical causes, and thereby claim that no miracle, other than that of the Qur'ān, was shown at the blessed hands of the Holy Prophet ﷺ.

In this verse (14), Allah Ta'ālā has clearly said: وَاِذَا رَاَوْا اٰيَةً يَّسْتَسْخِرُوْنَ (And when they see a sign, they make fun of it). Some people who deny miracles say that, at this place, the word: آیة ('āyat) does not mean مُعْجِزَة ('mu'jizah) or miracle, instead, it means rational arguments. But, this approach is patently wrong in view of what is said in the next verse that follows immediately: وَقَالُوْٓا اِنْ هٰذَآ اِلَّا سِحْرٌ مُّبِيْنٌ (and they say, "this is nothing but an open magic - 37:15). It is obvious that declaring an evidence and argument to be open magic does not make any sense. They could have said something like this only when they had seen a miracle.

Some deniers of miracles also say that the word: آیة ('āyat) means ayat

or verses of the Qur'ān, as it is these verses that the disbelievers declare as magic. But, the word: رَأَوْا (*rā aw*: they see) of the noble Qur'ān is flatly contradicting this assertion. The verses of the Qur'ān were not seen. Instead, they were heard. Hence, wherever Qur'ānic verses have been mentioned in the noble Qur'ān, the words used there are those of hearing, not of seeing. And place after place in the Qur'ān, the word: آية (*'āyat*) has appeared in the sense of *mu'jizah* or miracle. For instance, while reporting the demand of the Pharaoh from Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام it was said:

إِنْ كُنْتَ جِئْتَ بِآيَةٍ فَأْتِ بِهَآ إِنْ كُنْتَ مِنَ الصَّادِقِيْنَ

If you have come with a sign bring it out, if you are one of the truthful (7:106).

In response, Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام had shown the miracle of his staff turning into a serpent. As for the verses of the Qur'ān where it has been mentioned that the Holy Prophet ﷺ did not accede to their demand for a miracle, the fact is that miracles had been repeatedly shown thereby, but they used to ask for an ever-new miracle of their choice almost everyday. It was in response to such demands for miracles that they were turned down. It was done for the reason that a prophet of Allah shows miracles at the will and command of Allah Ta'ālā. If anyone still refuses to accept the true message conveyed by him, then, coming up with a new miracle everyday is counter to the dignity of the prophet, as well as counter to the will of Allah Ta'ālā.

In addition to that, it has been the customary practice of Allah Ta'ālā that, once some people were granted the miracle they had asked for - and they still failed to believe - then, they were destroyed through a mass punishment. But, in view of the intended survival of the community of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and with the objective of keeping it safe from any mass punishment, no such miracle on demand was shown before it.

Verses 19 - 26

فَإِنَّمَا هِيَ زَجْرَةٌ وَّاحِدَةٌ فَإِذَاهُمْ يَنْظُرُوْنَ ﴿١٩﴾ وَقَالُوْا يٰوَيْلَنَا هٰذَا
يَوْمُ الدِّيْنِ ﴿٢٠﴾ هٰذَا يَوْمُ الْفَصْلِ الَّذِيْ كُنْتُمْ بِهٖ تُكَذِّبُوْنَ ﴿٢١﴾
اُحْشُرُوا الَّذِيْنَ ظَلَمُوْا وَاَزْوَاجَهُمْ وَمَا كَانُوْا يَعْبُدُوْنَ ﴿٢٢﴾ مِنْ

دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ فَاهْدُوْهُمْ اِلٰى صِرَاطِ الْجَحِيْمِ ﴿٢٣﴾ وَقِفُوْهُمْ اِنَّهُمْ مَّسْئُوْلُوْنَ ﴿٢٤﴾ مَالَكُمْ لَاتَنَاصَرُوْنَ ﴿٢٥﴾ بَلْ هُمُ الْيَوْمَ مُسْتَسْلِمُوْنَ ﴿٢٦﴾

So, it will be only a single (castigating) Call, and all of a sudden they will begin to see. [19] **And they will be saying, "Woe to us; this is the Day of Retribution."** [20] **(It will be said to them,) This is the Day of Judgment that you used to deny.** [21] **Muster all those who were unjust, and their fellows, and whatever they used to worship** [22] **other than Allah, and show them the way to Jahannam,** [23] **and make them stop (for a while) - they are to be questioned:** [24]**" What has happened to you that you do not help each other?"** [25] **On the contrary, all of them today are totally submissive .** [26]

Commentary

After having shown the possibility and proof of 'Ākhirah or Hereafter, Allah Ta'ālā has described some events relating to Resurrection in these verses.

Given in the first verse (19) is the mode in which the dead will rise again. It was said: فَاِنَّمَا هِيَ زَجْرَةٌ وَّاحِدَةٌ (So, it will be only a single [castigating] Call and all of a sudden they will begin to see - 37:19). The word: زَجْرَةٌ (*Zajrah*) is a noun derived from زَجْرٌ (*zajr*), and it is used to carry many meanings in the Arabic language. Out of these, one meaning is: 'To utter such sounds which, when heard by cattle, would motivate them to rise and get moving.' Here, it means the second Ṣūr (Horn or Trumpet) that will be blown by the angel, Sayyidnā Isrāfīl عليه السلام. Hence, it has been expressed as *'zajrah'* for the reason that the way some sounds are produced to prompt cattle to rise and get moving, very similarly, this Ṣūr will be blown to make the dead rise. (Tafsīr al-Qurṭubī)

Though Allah Ta'ālā is, in His infinite power, inherently capable of making the dead rise again without having the Ṣūr blown, yet this Ṣūr will be blown in order to highlight the awe of the Resurrection (Tafsīr Kabīr). Its effect on the disbelievers has been identified as: فَاِذَاهُمْ يَنْظُرُوْنَ (and all of a sudden they will begin to see - 37:19), that is, the way they could see in the mortal world, in the same way, they would be able to see there.

Some other commentators have explained it by saying that, overtaken by wonder, they will start looking at each other. (Qurṭubī)

In verse 22, it was said: اُحْشُرُوا الَّذِيْنَ ظَلَمُوْا وَاَزْوَاجَهُمْ (Muster all those who were unjust, and their fellows). Here, the text has used the word: اَزْوَاج (*azwāj*) for cohorts, fellow travelers,or people of the same persuasion - a word literally meaning 'pair'. Then, this word is very commonly used in the sense of spouses. That is why some commentators have said that it means wives of the Mushriks who were also Mushriks. But, in the sight of most commentators, the word: اَزْوَاج (*azwāj*) at this place means nothing but people of the same persuasion, and it also finds support in a saying of Sayyidnā 'Umar ؓ. Imām al-Baihaqī, 'Abd-ur-Razzāq and others have reported this saying of Sayyidnā 'Umar ؓ under their explanation of this verse. They have said that the word: اَزْوَاجُهُمْ (azwājuhum) in the text means 'other people like them.' Thus, (while mustering the unjust), huddled together there will be the people of the same interest, fornicators with other fornicators and drunkards with other drunkards. (Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī and Maẓharī)

In addition to that, by saying: وَمَا كَانُوْا يَعْبُدُوْنَ (and whatever they used to worship - 37:22), it was expressly laid out that, along with the Mushriks, all those false objects and entities like idols and satans they used to worship and equate with Allah as His associates in the life of the world will all be mustered together - so that, at that time, the helplessness of these false objects of worship could be demonstrated publicly.

After that, a command will go forth to angels: فَاهْدُوْهُمْ اِلٰى صِرَاطِ الْجَحِيْمِ (and show them the way to Jahannam - 37:23). When the angels will take them away, and reach close to the Bridge of Sirat, they will be commanded: قِفُوْهُمْ اِنَّهُمْ مَّسْئُوْلُوْنَ (make them stop - they are to be questioned - 37:24). Thereupon, at this place, they will be questioned about their beliefs and deeds - that have been mentioned in the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth at many places.

Verses 27 - 40

وَاَقْبَلَ بَعْضُهُمْ عَلٰى بَعْضٍ يَّتَسَآءَلُوْنَ ﴿٢٧﴾ قَالُوْآ اِنَّكُمْ كُنْتُمْ
تَاْتُوْنَنَا عَنِ الْيَمِيْنِ ﴿٢٨﴾ قَالُوْا بَلْ لَّمْ تَكُوْنُوْا مُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿٢٩﴾ وَمَا

كَانَ لَنَا عَلَيْكُم مِّن سُلْطَٰنٍ ۚ بَلْ كُنتُمْ قَوْمًا طَٰغِينَ ﴿٣٠﴾ فَحَقَّ
عَلَيْنَا قَوْلُ رَبِّنَا ۖ إِنَّا لَذَآئِقُونَ ﴿٣١﴾ فَأَغْوَيْنَٰكُمْ إِنَّا كُنَّا غَٰوِينَ ﴿٣٢﴾
فَإِنَّهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ فِى ٱلْعَذَابِ مُشْتَرِكُونَ ﴿٣٣﴾ إِنَّا كَذَٰلِكَ نَفْعَلُ
بِٱلْمُجْرِمِينَ ﴿٣٤﴾ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوٓا إِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ لَآ إِلَٰهَ إِلَّا ٱللَّهُ
يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾ وَيَقُولُونَ أَئِنَّا لَتَارِكُوٓا ءَالِهَتِنَا لِشَاعِرٍ مَّجْنُونٍ
﴿٣٦﴾ بَلْ جَآءَ بِٱلْحَقِّ وَصَدَّقَ ٱلْمُرْسَلِينَ ﴿٣٧﴾ إِنَّكُمْ لَذَآئِقُوا
ٱلْعَذَابِ ٱلْأَلِيمِ ﴿٣٨﴾ وَمَا تُجْزَوْنَ إِلَّا مَا كُنتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٣٩﴾ إِلَّا
عِبَادَ ٱللَّهِ ٱلْمُخْلَصِينَ ﴿٤٠﴾

And some of them (the followers of their chiefs) will turn to others (the chiefs), asking questions from one another. [27] They (the followers) will say, "You were the ones who used to come to (mislead) us forcefully." [28] They (the chiefs) will say, "On the contrary, you yourselves were no believers. [29] And we had no authority over you at all, but you yourselves were a transgressing people. [30] So, the word of our Lord has come true against us. Indeed, we have to taste (the punishment). [31] We did misguide you, (because) we were ourselves erroneous". [32] So, this day, they will be sharers in the punishment. [33] This is how we deal with the criminals. [34] They were those to whom when it was said: 'there is no god but Allah', they waxed proud, [35] and used to say, "Are we really to leave our gods because of an insane poet?" [36] No, he has come with the truth and has confirmed all the messengers (of Allah). [37] Surely you have to taste the painful punishment- [38] And you will be recompensed for nothing but for what you used to do - [39] unlike the chosen servants of Allah. [40]

Commentary

When the leading elders among disbelievers who had misled their common adherents appear before their followers on the plains of resurrection, they would, rather than help each other, start arguing among themselves. The present verses carry a sampling of the same

mutual argumentation between the contesting parties as well as the sad end they will have to face. Two things are noteworthy here:

1. The word: يمين (Yamīn) in: إِنَّكُمْ كُنتُمْ تَأْتُونَنَا عَنِ الْيَمِينِ (You were the ones who used to come to [mislead] us forcefully.- 37:28) may have several meanings. One possible meaning of the expression: عَنِ الْيَمِينِ (*'ani 'l-yamīn*) is 'powerfully' or 'forcefully'. The translation given in the text above is based on this meaning, which seems to be fairly clear and cloudless. In addition to that, 'yamin' is also used to mean oath. Some commentators have explained it as: 'you came to us with oaths,' that is, 'you made us believe on oath that our creed is correct and the teaching of the messenger of Allah is, God forbid, false.' In terms of the words of the Qur'ān, both these explanations are possible and acceptable comfortably.

2. From verse 33: فَإِنَّهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ فِي الْعَذَابِ مُشْتَرِكُونَ (So, this day, they will be sharers in the punishment.), we learn that should a certain person invite someone else to participate in what is impermissible and use his clout to coax him into sin, then, he will certainly incur the punishment of so inviting that person to sin. But, a person who accepts his invitation of his volition and choice, he too cannot be absolved from the sin of his deed. He cannot appear in the Hereafter and get away by saying that he was made to go astray by this or that person. Yes, if he has not committed sin by his volition and choice, instead, has done so under coercion, just to save his life, then, insha'Allah, it is hoped that he will be forgiven.

Verses 41 - 61

أُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمْ رِزْقٌ مَّعْلُومٌ ﴿٤١﴾ فَوَاكِهُ ۖ وَهُم مُّكْرَمُونَ ﴿٤٢﴾ فِي
جَنَّاتِ النَّعِيمِ ﴿٤٣﴾ عَلَىٰ سُرُرٍ مُّتَقَابِلِينَ ﴿٤٤﴾ يُطَافُ عَلَيْهِم بِكَأْسٍ
مِّن مَّعِينٍ ﴿٤٥﴾ بَيْضَاءَ لَذَّةٍ لِّلشَّارِبِينَ ﴿٤٦﴾ لَا فِيهَا غَوْلٌ وَلَا هُمْ
عَنْهَا يُنزَفُونَ ﴿٤٧﴾ وَعِندَهُمْ قَاصِرَاتُ الطَّرْفِ عِينٌ ﴿٤٨﴾ كَأَنَّهُنَّ
بَيْضٌ مَّكْنُونٌ ﴿٤٩﴾ فَأَقْبَلَ بَعْضُهُمْ عَلَىٰ بَعْضٍ يَتَسَاءَلُونَ ﴿٥٠﴾
قَالَ قَائِلٌ مِّنْهُمْ إِنِّي كَانَ لِي قَرِينٌ ﴿٥١﴾ يَقُولُ أَئِنَّكَ لَمِنَ

الْمُصَدِّقِيْنَ ﴿٥٢﴾ ءَ اِذَا مِتْنَا وَ كُنَّا تُرَابًا وَّعِظَامًا ءَ اِنَّا لَمَدِيْنُوْنَ ﴿٥٣﴾
قَالَ هَلْ اَنْتُمْ مُّطَّلِعُوْنَ ﴿٥٤﴾ فَاطَّلَعَ فَرَاٰهُ فِىْ سَوَآءِ الْجَحِيْمِ ﴿٥٥﴾
قَالَ تَاللّٰهِ اِنْ كِدْتَّ لَتُرْدِيْنِ ﴿٥٦﴾ وَلَوْلَا نِعْمَةُ رَبِّىْ لَكُنْتُ مِنَ
الْمُحْضَرِيْنَ ﴿٥٧﴾ اَفَمَا نَحْنُ بِمَيِّتِيْنَ ﴿٥٨﴾ اِلَّا مَوْتَتَنَا الْاُوْلٰى وَمَا
نَحْنُ بِمُعَذَّبِيْنَ ﴿٥٩﴾ اِنَّ هٰذَا لَهُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيْمُ ﴿٦٠﴾ لِمِثْلِ هٰذَا
فَلْيَعْمَلِ الْعٰمِلُوْنَ ﴿٦١﴾

Those are the people for whom there is a known provision, [41] the fruits; and they will be honored [42] in Gardens of Bliss [43] facing each other on couches. [44] They will be served with a cup from a flowing drink, [45] white, delicious for those who drink. [46] There will be no headache therein, nor will they be intoxicated with it, [47] and by their side there will be females restricting their gazes (to their husbands), having pretty big eyes, [48] as if they were eggs hidden (under feathers protected from pollution). [49] Then they will turn to each other asking questions mutually, [50] A speaker from them will say, " I had a companion [51] who used to say (to me), 'Are you one of those who believe? [52] Is it when we have died and become dust and bones? Is it true that we are going to be recompensed [for our deeds]?'" [53] He (the speaker) will say (to other people in Paradise) "Would you like to have a look (to Jahannam to find out what happened to that companion of mine)?" [54] So he looked - and he saw him in the middle of Jahannam. [55] He said, "By Allah, you were going almost to ruin me. But for the favour of my Lord, I would have been among those produced for punishment." [57] (Then the speaker will address the other people of Paradise in delight and wonder, saying, "Are we not then to die anymore [58] beyond our first death, nor are we going to be punished? [59] This is, indeed, the great success. [60] For this kind (of achievement), all workers must work. [61]

Commentary

After having described the condition of the people of Jahannam (Hell), the verses cited above have mentioned the condition of the people

of Jannah (Paradise). This description is in two parts. The initial ten verses describe the comforts the people of Jannah will be blessed with. After that, the verses that follow take up an event relating to a particular inmate of Jannah which has lessons of guidance. Out of what has been said in the first ten verses, a few things are worth mentioning. These are as follows:

1. It was said in the first verse (41): أُولَٰٓئِكَ لَهُمْ رِزْقٌ مَّعْلُومٌ (Those are the people for whom there is a known provision,). Commentators explain it variously. (1) Some say that it refers to the detailed description of the provisions of Paradise mentioned in different Sūrahs of the Qur'ān. Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānavi has elected to go by this very Tafsīr. (2) Others have said that 'known provision' means that its timings are determined and known, that is, it will be bestowed punctually all mornings and evenings as indicated in another verse (بُكْرَةً وَّعَشِيًّا : 'and for them there is their provision in it, morning and evening' -Maryam, 19:62) where the words: صبح و شام (morning and evening) have been explicitly mentioned. (3) Then, there is a third Tafsīr as well. According to this explanation, 'known provision' means that this provision will be certain and everlasting - unlike the world of our experience where no one can say with any degree of certainty what and how much of that provision he or she is going to get; nor does anyone know how long his provision will remain available to him or her. Every human heart is all the time under the fear that the blessings he has may disappear in future- may be, comes a tomorrow and they are no more there. Jannah will be free of this danger. Instead, the provision of Paradise will be certain and everlasting, both. (Qurṭubī, and others)

2. By saying: فَوَاكِهُ (*fawākih*: fruits - 42) immediately after, the Qur'ān has itself explained *'rizq'* (provision) - that it will comprise fruits. The word: فواكه explained (*fawākih*) is the plural form of: فَاكِهَةٌ (*fākihah*) and it denotes everything eaten for the taste and not to remove hunger. It is conveniently translated as fruit since it is eaten for the taste. Otherwise, the sense of *fākihah* is much wider than that of fruit. Imām Rāzī has culled the subtle point from this very word that the cuisine offered in Jannah will be for the taste of it, and not for removing hunger. The reason is that in Jannah there is nothing one would really need. Once there, one would need no food or energy-giving intake in order to sustain

life or preserve health. Yes, there will be wish. The fulfillment of wish will bring the pleasure of satiation - and that would be the objective of all blessings of Paradise. (Tafsīr Kabīr, page 98. v.7)

3. Then, by saying: وَهُمْ مُّكْرَمُوْنَ (*wa hum mukramūn*: and they will be honored), it was given to understand that this provision will be presented to the people of Jannah with full protocol of hospitality and honor, for an absence of it would render even the most delicious offering remain without relish. From here, we also learn that the right of a guest is not fulfilled simply by feeding him or her. In fact, the warmth of hospitality and the according of honor to a guest is also included under his or her rights.

4. After that, it was said: عَلٰى سُرُرٍ مُّتَقٰبِلِيْنَ (*'alā sururim-mutaqabilīn*: facing each other on couches. - 37:44). This is a portrayal of the state in which the people of Jannah will be sitting - no backs against each other. How would that seating arrangement turn out to be in practice? That only Allah knows best. Some commentators say that the circuit of the seating arrangement would be so extensive that no one will need to sit with one's back towards anyone, and Allah Ta'ālā will bless the people of Jannah with such power of sight, audition and speech that they would be able to comfortably converse with people sitting at varying distances. Then, there are some other commentators who have also said that these couches, thrones or settees will be revolving - readily zooming towards whomsoever one wishes to talk to. And Allah knows best.

5. The word: لَذَّةٍ appearing in verse 46: لَذَّةٍ لِّلشّٰرِبِيْنَ (*ladhdhatil-lishshāribīn*: delicious for those who drink) is essentially a verbal noun which means 'to be tasteful'. Therefore, some commentators have said that, at this place, the adjunct (*mudaf*) stands elided. Initially, it was: ذَاتِ لَذَّةٍ (*dhati ladhdhatin*: having taste). But, there is no need for this labored approach. First of all, even if *'ladhdhah'* is taken to mean nothing but a verbal noun is frequently used in the sense of *ismul-fā'il*. In that case, it would mean that it would be 'a taste personified' for those who drink. In addition to that, there is another adjectival form of: لَذَّةٌ : *ladhdhatun* besides لَذِيْذٌ : *ladhidhun* - that is, لَذٌّ : *ladhdhun*. It is possible that the word: لَذَّةٌ : *ladhdhatun* used here may be a feminine form of the same لَذٌّ : *ladhdhun* (Tafsīr Qurṭubī). In this case, it would mean: 'delicious for those who drink.'

6. The word: غَوْلٌ (*ghaul*) in verse 47: لَافِيْهَا غَوْلٌ (*lā fihā ghaulūn*) has been explained variously as 'headache' or 'abdominal pain' or 'smell or corruption' or 'muddling of reason'. The fact is that the word: غَوْل (*ghaul*) is used to convey all these meanings, while Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Jarīr says that *'ghaul'* appears here in the sense of bane, trouble or unwelcome consequences which makes it mean that the drink offered in Jannah will have no such evil consequences as are found in wines consumed in the mortal world - no hangovers of headache, stomach pain, bad breath or loss of reason. (Tafsīr Ibn Jarīr).

7. In verse 48, it was said: قٰصِرٰتُ الطَّرْفِ (restricting their gazes). This is an attribute of the hurs or houris of Jannah - wide eyes with lowered gaze. It means that except for the mates to whom Allah Ta'ālā gives them in marital bond, they will not raise their eyes to cast a look at any other male. 'Allamah Ibn-ul-Jauzi reports: These women will tell their spouses, 'By the honor of our Lord, I see no one better than you in this Jannah. Praised be Allah who made me your spouse and made you, mine.'

'Allāmah Ibn-ul-Jauzī has given yet another sense of 'those with lowered gaze' when he says that they will cause the gaze of their spouses remain lowered. In other words, they will be so beautiful and so faithful that their spouses would simply not have a wish to look at anyone else. (Tafsīr Zad-ul-Masīr , pages 57, 58, volume 8)

8. In verse 48: كَاَنَّهُنَّ بَيْضٌ مَّكْنُوْنٌ (as if they were hidden eggs). As obvious, the hurs of Jannah have been likened to hidden eggs in this verse. The simile was popularly recognized among the people of Arabia. The egg hidden under feathers remains safe from the pollution, therefore it is always neat and clean. Moreover, its color is yellowish white,which was deemed by the Arabs as the most attractive color for women. Then there are other commentators who say that this simile does not relate to eggs as such, instead, the simile relates to the membrane hidden in the egg, and the sense is that the skin of those women will be as soft as the membrane of the eggs. (Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī) Allah knows best.

An inmate of Jannah and his disbelieving acquaintance

After having described the general condition of the people of Jannah, one of them has been mentioned particularly. Once he has settled down with other inmates of Jannah, he will recall a disbelieving acquaintance

who denied the possibility of the Hereafter during his mortal life. Then, with the permission of Allah Ta'ālā, he will be given an opportunity to talk to him by peeping into the Jahannam. The identity of this man has not been given in the Qur'ān. Therefore, it cannot be said with any degree of certainty as to who this person could be. Still, some commentators have opined that the name of the believer was Yahudah and the name of his disbelieving acquaintance was Maṭrus, and they were the same two comrades mentioned earlier in the verse of Sūrah al-Kahf: وَاضْرِبْ لَهُمْ مَّثَلاً رَّجُلَيْنِ... (And give them an example. There were two men... - 18:32). (Tafsīr Maẓharī)

And to determine the identity of this person, 'Allāmah as-Suyūṭī has reported yet another event from several tabi'in that there were two partners in a business. They earned eight thousand dinars out of it, and took four thousand dinars each. One partner spent one thousand dinars from his share to buy a land. The other partner was a pious man. He prayed: 'O Allah, this person has bought a plot of land for one thousand dinars. I buy a plot of land from You in Jannah against one thousand dinars' - and gave away one thousand dinars in Ṣadaqah (charity). Then, his partner-friend spent another one thousand dinars and made a house for himself. Then, the pious man said, 'O Allah, this man has made a house for himself by spending one thousand dinars. I buy a house in Jannah against one thousand dinars' - and, having said that, he gave away another one thousand dinars in Ṣadaqah. After that, his partner-friend married a woman and spent one thousand dinars over her. Then, he said: 'O Allah, this man has married a woman, and has spent one thousand dinars over her. I propose to one of the women in Jannah and offer this modest sum of one thousand dinars' - and, having said that, he gave away yet another one thousand dinars in Ṣadaqah. Finally, when his partner-friend bought some attendants and things by spending one thousand dinars, the pious partner, once again, gave out one thousand dinars in Ṣadaqah and prayed to Allah that he be blessed with attendants and things of Jannah against it.

After that, this believing servant of Allah was caught in some dire need, and he thought of his former partner hoping that he would be good enough to help him. So, he told him about his need. His former partner asked him, 'What became of your share of money?' In answer, he told him

the whole story. Wondering thereupon, he asked, 'Do you really believe it as true that, once we die and become dust, we shall get another life and, in that life, we shall be given the return for our deeds? Get lost. I am not going to give you anything.' After that, both of them died. The man of Jannah referred to in the cited verses is the servant of Allah who had given all his wealth in Ṣadaqah for the sake of 'Ākhirah (life in the Hereafter), and his acquaintance in Jahannam is the same partner who had chided him on his confirmation of the life to come, the 'Ākhirah. (Tafsīr ad-Durr-ul-Manthūr with reference to Ibn Jarīr and others, p. 165, v. 5)

An advice to avoid bad company

Anyhow, whoever this person may be - it does not matter. This event has been mentioned with a purpose. The noble Qur'ān is really alerting people towards a beneficial rule operative in human relations. Let everyone make a careful survey of his or her circle of friends, and try to find out whether or nor there is someone included therein who may actually be dragging them towards the sad end of the Jahannam. The destruction bad company can bring about can only be discovered fully and truly in the Hereafter - and that will be a time when there will be no escape from such destruction. Therefore, it is better to take one's guard right here in this world in matters concerning the taking of friends and promoting of relationships, something that must be done with due caution and judgment. There are occasions and circumstances when one does not foresee what would happen after having inculcated relationships with someone who disbelieves or disobeys. What ultimately happens is that one starts becoming affected by his ideas, thoughts and way of life without having any sense of that which is happening to him. This attitude proves lethal for one who is so affected in terms of the end he would have in the Hereafter.

Wondering about not having to die anymore

When the man who has been mentioned here will peep into Jahannam to have a look at his disbelieving acquaintance, it has been mentioned that the same man will be so delighted with the blessings of Jannah that he will exclaim: "Is it that we do not have to die anymore?" It does not mean that he will not be certain of the eternal life of Jannah. Instead, it is like the case of a person who achieves the highest degree of happiness. Such a person would occasionally break into exclamations that

show as if he does not believe his eyes on having received such enormous blessings. These remarks are of the same nature.

Towards the end, the noble Qur'ān turns our attention to the essential lesson embedded in this event and says: لِمِثْلِ هٰذَا فَلْيَعْمَلِ الْعٰمِلُوْنَ which means 'For this kind (of achievement), all workers must work.'

Verses 62 - 74

اَذٰلِكَ خَيْرٌ نُّزُلًا اَمْ شَجَرَةُ الزَّقُّوْمِ ﴿٦٢﴾ اِنَّا جَعَلْنٰهَا فِتْنَةً لِّلظّٰلِمِيْنَ
﴿٦٣﴾ اِنَّهَا شَجَرَةٌ تَخْرُجُ فِيْٓ اَصْلِ الْجَحِيْمِ ﴿٦٤﴾ طَلْعُهَا كَاَنَّهٗ
رُءُوْسُ الشَّيٰطِيْنِ ﴿٦٥﴾ فَاِنَّهُمْ لَاٰكِلُوْنَ مِنْهَا فَمَالِئُوْنَ مِنْهَا الْبُطُوْنَ
﴿٦٦﴾ ثُمَّ اِنَّ لَهُمْ عَلَيْهَا لَشَوْبًا مِّنْ حَمِيْمٍ ﴿٦٧﴾ ثُمَّ اِنَّ مَرْجِعَهُمْ
لَاِلَى الْجَحِيْمِ ﴿٦٨﴾ اِنَّهُمْ اَلْفَوْا اٰبَآءَهُمْ ضَآلِّيْنَ ﴿٦٩﴾ فَهُمْ عَلٰٓى
اٰثٰرِهِمْ يُهْرَعُوْنَ ﴿٧٠﴾ وَلَقَدْ ضَلَّ قَبْلَهُمْ اَكْثَرُ الْاَوَّلِيْنَ ﴿٧١﴾ وَلَقَدْ
اَرْسَلْنَا فِيْهِمْ مُّنْذِرِيْنَ ﴿٧٢﴾ فَانْظُرْ كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُنْذَرِيْنَ
﴿٧٣﴾ اِلَّا عِبَادَ اللّٰهِ الْمُخْلَصِيْنَ ﴿٧٤﴾

Is that better as hospitality or the tree of Zaqqūm? [62] We have made it a test for the unjust. [63] It is a tree that comes out in the bottom of Jahannam. [64] Its fruits are like the heads of satans. [65] So, they have to eat from it and have to fill their bellies with it. [66] Then they will have, on top of it, a mixture made of boiling water. [67] Then, their return is but to the Fire. [68] They found their fathers on the wrong path. [69] So, they used to run in their foot steps. [70] And most of the earlier ones (too) had gone astray before them. [71] And We did send warners among them. [72] So look, how was the end of those warned - [73] except the chosen servants of Allah. [74]

Commentary

After having described the conditions prevailing in Jahannam and Jannah briefly, Allah Ta'ālā has invited every human being to compare and decide as to which of the two conditions is better. It was said: اَذٰلِكَ خَيْرٌ

نُّزُلًا اَمْ شَجَرَةُ الزَّقُّوْمِ that is, 'there are these blessings of Jannah mentioned here - are they better? Or, is it the tree of Zaqqūm the fruits of which will be fed to the people of Jahannam?

The reality of Zaqqūm

A tree by the name of Zaqqūm is found in the territory of Tihāmah, a part of the Arabian Peninsula, and 'Allāmah 'Ālūsi has written that it is also found in other barren deserts. Some say that this is the same tree known as تھوہر *thohar* (Euphorbia neriifolia or antiquorum) in Urdu and Hindi. Some others point out to another tree known as *nagphan* (hood of serpent) found in India as being the *zaqqūm* that appears to be more likely. Now, commentators differ in this matter. What tree is it the fruit from which the people of Jahannam will be given to eat? Is it one of the trees found somewhere in this world, or is it some other tree? Some support the view that it is what is found growing in this world. Some others say that the zaqqum of Jahannam is an entirely different thing. It has nothing to do with the earthly *zaqqūm*. Apparently, the way there are snakes and scorpions in the mortal world, it seems they are there in Jahannam as well. But, it goes without saying, that the snakes and scorpions of the Jahannam will be far ferocious than their counterparts here. Similarly, the *zaqqūm* of Jahannam will, though, be like the zaqqum of this world in terms of its genus, but it will be far too gruesome to look at, and far too unpalatable to eat. And Allah is pure and high who knows best.

In verse 63, it was said: اِنَّا جَعَلْنٰهَا فِتْنَةً لِّلظّٰلِمِيْنَ (We have made it [the tree of zaqqum] a test ['*fitnah*'] for the unjust). Here, according to some commentators, فِتْنَة (*fitnah*) means punishment, that is, 'have turned this tree into a source of punishment.' But, most commentators say that it is more appropriate to translate '*fitnah*' at this place as 'trial' or 'test'. The purpose here is to say that Allah wishes to test as to who believes in it, and who ridicules it. Consequently, what happened was that the disbelievers of Arabia failed this test. Rather than fear this punishment and believe, they opted for the method of confrontation and ridicule. According to Ḥadīth narrations, when the verses of the Qur'ān in which it has been mentioned that the disbelievers will be made to eat the fruit of *zaqqūm*, Abū Jahl said to his accomplices: "Your friend (Sayyidnā Muḥammad al-Muṣṭafa ﷺ) says that there is a tree in the Fire -

although, fire eats the tree - while we, by God, do know this much that zaqqum is the name of butter-topped dates. So, come and eat this date and butter" (ad-Durr-ul-Manthūr, p. 277, v. 5). In fact, in the language of the Berbers, dates topped with butter or cream were known as zaqqum, therefore, Abū Jahl made use of this opportunity to ridicule the prophet of Islam. To the two things he said, Allah Ta'ālā gave an answer in a single sentence by saying: إِنَّهَا شَجَرَةٌ تَخْرُجُ فِي أَصْلِ الْجَحِيمِ (That is a tree that comes out in the bottom of Jahannam - 37:64). Thus, neither does it mean date and butter, nor the objection as to how could a tree survive in fire hold valid - particularly when that tree owes its very origin to the fire itself. Hence, Allah Ta'ālā has placed such properties in it that instead of getting burnt in fire, it is actually nurtured by it. For example, there are many life forms that would survive only in fire that does not burn them, in fact, makes them grow.

By saying: طَلْعُهَا كَأَنَّهُ رُءُوسُ الشَّيَاطِينِ (Its fruits are like the heads of the satans.- 65), the fruits of *zaqqūm* have been likened to the heads of the satans. Some commentators have translated the word: الشَّيَاطِين (*ash-shayāṭīn*) in this verse as 'serpents' since the fruit of *zaqqūm* resembles the hood of the serpent. Therefore, in Urdu and Hindi too, it is called 'nagphan' (hood of the serpent) for this very reason. But most commentators have said that the word: الشَّيَاطِين (ash-shayāṭīn) here should be taken in its well-recognized sense. Thus, it would mean that, in its ugliness, the fruit of *zaqqūm* is like the head of the satans. Now, let there be no doubt here that nobody has seen the Shaitan, why then, would something be likened to him? The reason is that it is an imaginative simile. Speaking metaphorically, things ugly and grotesque are commonly likened to satans, Jinns and ghosts. The purpose is only to express an extreme degree of ugliness. The simile used here is also of this very nature. (Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī and others).

The sense of the rest of the verses is clear from their translation.

Verses 75 - 82

وَلَقَدْ نَادٰىنَا نُوحٌ فَلَنِعْمَ الْمُجِيبُونَ ﴿٧٥﴾ وَنَجَّيْنٰهُ وَأَهْلَهُ مِنَ الْكَرْبِ
الْعَظِيمِ ﴿٧٦﴾ وَجَعَلْنَا ذُرِّيَّتَهُ هُمُ الْبٰقِينَ ﴿٧٧﴾ وَتَرَكْنَا عَلَيْهِ فِي

الْاٰخِرِيْنَ ﴿٧٨﴾ سَلٰمٌ عَلٰى نُوْحٍ فِى الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿٧٩﴾ اِنَّا كَذٰلِكَ
نَجْزِى الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ ﴿٨٠﴾ اِنَّهٗ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿٨١﴾ ثُمَّ اَغْرَقْنَا
الْاٰخَرِيْنَ ﴿٨٢﴾

And Nūḥ did call Us (for help after he was disappointed from his people), so We were the best to respond. [75] **And We delivered him and his family from the great agony,** [76] **and made his progeny the sole survivors.** [77] **And We left for him (a word of praise) among the later people, (that is):** [78] **Salām be on Nūḥ among (the people of) all the worlds.** [79] **Certainly, this is how We reward those who are good in deeds.** [80] **He was one of Our believing servants.** [81] **Then, we drowned others.** [82]

Commentary

In the previous verses, it was said that Allah had sent messengers to warn the earlier communities as well, but most of the people did not listen to them, therefore, they met a very sad end. Now, from here details of that brief statement made earlier are being given. As a corollary, events relating to several noble prophets have been narrated. Mentioned first in these verses was Sayyidnā Nūḥ عليه السلام. The event relating to Sayyidnā Nūḥ عليه السلام has appeared in Sūrah Hud (11) with sufficient details. A few things connected with the explanation of these very verses particularly are being taken up here.

In verse 75, it was said: وَلَقَدْ نَادٰىنَا نُوْحٌ (And Nūḥ did call Us). According to most commentators, it means either the prayer of Sayyidnā Nūḥ عليه السلام mentioned in Sūrah Nūḥ: رَبِّ لَاتَذَرْ عَلَى الْاَرْضِ مِنَ الْكٰفِرِيْنَ دَيَّارًا (My Lord, do not leave on earth even a single inhabitant (surviving) from the disbelievers - 71:26), or that which appears in Sūrah Al-Qamar: اَنِّىْ مَغْلُوْبٌ فَانْتَصِرْ (I am overpowered, so defend me - 54:10). Sayyidnā Nūḥ عليه السلام had made this prayer at a time when his people had crossed all limits in being wicked and unruly to him and had gone as far as conspiring to kill him.

And in verse 77, it was said: وَجَعَلْنَا ذُرِّيَّتَهٗ هُمُ الْبَاقِيْنَ (And [We] made his progeny the sole survivors.). According to most commentators, this verse means that the majority of world population was annihilated in the great flood during the time of Sayyidnā Nūḥ عليه السلام. After that, all races in the

entire world originated from the three sons of Sayyidnā Nūḥ عليه السلام. Sam was one of his sons. His children were the forbears of the peoples of Arabia and Persia. The second son was named Ham. The populations in African countries came from him. Some scholars have included the people of India in the same racial stock. Yafith was the third son. From him came the races known as Turk, Mongol and Gog and Magog. Out of the people who had embarked the ark of Sayyidnā Nūḥ عليه السلام and had survived the Flood, the three sons of Sayyidnā Nūḥ عليه السلام were the only ones whose progeny survived later on.

However, some scholars - whose number is very small - hold the view that the Flood during the time of Sayyidnā Nūḥ was not world wide, instead, it was restricted to the land of ancient Arabia. In their sight, it was only in that land area where the progeny of Sayyidnā Nūḥ عليه السلام flourished and survived, and it was through them that the Arab race came. That the race of others spread out in other regions of the world does not go on to contradict this verse. (Bayān-ul-Qur'ān)

A third group of commentators says that as for the Great Flood, it was worldwide, but the universal racial stock did not come from the sons of Sayyidnā Nūḥ عليه السلام alone. Rather, it spread out from all those people who were on board with Sayyidnā Nūḥ عليه السلام. This group of commentators takes the restrictive statement of the Qur'ān in the sense of relative restriction, and says that, at this place, the real purpose is to state that the race of the people drowned did not continue. (Qurṭubī)

Given the context of the Qur'ān, this third view is very weak, while the first view is the best for the reason that it is supported by some *aḥādīth* as well which Imām Tirmidhī and others have reported directly from the Holy Prophet ﷺ under the Tafsīr of this verse. In a narration from Sayyidnā Samurah Ibn Jundub رضي الله عنه, the Holy Prophet ﷺ has been reported to have said: "Sam is the father of the people of Arabia; Ḥām is the father of the people of Ethiopia, and Yafith, that of the people of Byzantine." Imām Tirmidhī calls this Ḥadīth as Ḥasan, while Imām Ḥākim rates it as Ṣaḥīḥ (Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī, p. 98, v.23).

In verses 78 and 79, it was said: وَتَرَكْنَا عَلَيْهِ فِي الْآخِرِينَ سَلَامٌ عَلَىٰ نُوحٍ فِي الْعَالَمِينَ (And We left for him (a word of praise) among the later people, (that is): Salām be on Nūḥ among [the people of] all the worlds.). It means that, in

the sight of those who were born after Sayyidnā Nūḥ عليه السلام, he was made so revered that they would continue praying for his peace and well-being right through the last day of the Qiyāmah. As such, this is how it actually happened. All religions with attribution to Divine Scriptures subscribe to the mission of Sayyidnā Nūḥ عليه السلام as a prophet and hold him in great reverence. In addition to Muslims, even Jews and Christians regard him as being their spiritual leader.

Verses 83 - 98

وَإِنَّ مِنْ شِيعَتِهِ لَإِبْرٰهِيمَ ﴿٨٣﴾ إِذْ جَآءَ رَبَّهُ بِقَلْبٍ سَلِيمٍ ﴿٨٤﴾ إِذْ قَالَ
لِأَبِيهِ وَقَوْمِهِ مَاذَا تَعْبُدُونَ ﴿٨٥﴾ أَئِفْكًا اٰلِهَةً دُونَ اللّٰهِ تُرِيدُونَ ﴿٨٦﴾
فَمَا ظَنُّكُمْ بِرَبِّ الْعٰلَمِينَ ﴿٨٧﴾ فَنَظَرَ نَظْرَةً فِي النُّجُومِ ﴿٨٨﴾ فَقَالَ
إِنِّي سَقِيمٌ ﴿٨٩﴾ فَتَوَلَّوْا عَنْهُ مُدْبِرِينَ ﴿٩٠﴾ فَرَاغَ إِلٰٓى اٰلِهَتِهِمْ فَقَالَ
أَلَا تَأْكُلُونَ ﴿٩١﴾ مَا لَكُمْ لَا تَنْطِقُونَ ﴿٩٢﴾ فَرَاغَ عَلَيْهِمْ ضَرْبًا
بِالْيَمِينِ ﴿٩٣﴾ فَأَقْبَلُوٓا إِلَيْهِ يَزِفُّونَ ﴿٩٤﴾ قَالَ أَتَعْبُدُونَ مَا تَنْحِتُونَ
﴿٩٥﴾ وَاللّٰهُ خَلَقَكُمْ وَمَا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٩٦﴾ قَالُوا ابْنُوا لَهُ بُنْيَانًا فَأَلْقُوهُ
فِي الْجَحِيمِ ﴿٩٧﴾ فَأَرَادُوا بِهِ كَيْدًا فَجَعَلْنٰهُمُ الْأَسْفَلِينَ ﴿٩٨﴾

And certainly from his adherents was Ibrāhīm. [83] **(Remember) when he came to his Lord with a pure heart,** [84] **when he said to his father and his people, "What is that which you worship? Do you wish (to have) fallacious gods other than Allah?** [86] **Then, what is your opinion about the Lord of the worlds?"** [87]

Then, he cast a look at the stars, [88] **and then said, "I feel indisposed"** [89] **So they departed from him, turning their backs.** [90] **And he made his way to their gods and said to them, "Why would you not eat?** [91] **What is wrong with you that you do not speak?"** [92] **Then he attacked them striking with his right hand.** [93] **Then, they (the idolaters) came to him rushing.** [94] **He said, "Do you worship what is carved by yourselves,** [95] **while Allah has created you and what you make?"** [96] **They said, "Build for him a structure, and throw him**

into the blazing fire." [97] **So, they intended to bring harm to him, but We made them the lowest (by frustrating their plan).** [98]

Commentary

After having related the event concerning Sayyidnā Nūḥ عليه السلام the Qur'ān mentions two events from the blessed life of Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام. Both events highlight the great sacrifices Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام offered for the sake of Allah alone. Out of these, the first event mentioned in the verses cited above relates to Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام being thrown into the fire. Its details have already appeared in Sūrah Al-Anbiyā' (21: 51-70). Yet, the way it has been described at this place, it needs some explanatory notes that appear below.

The word: شِيعَة (*shi'ah*) in verse 83: وَإِنَّ مِنْ شِيعَتِهِ لَإِبْرٰهِيمَ (And certainly from his adherents was Ibrāhīm.) is used in the Arabic language for a group or party the individuals from which are similar to each other in basic concepts and methods - and here it is obvious that the pronoun in: شِيعَتِهِ (*shi'atihi*) is reverting to Sayyidnā Nūḥ عليه السلام. Therefore, it would mean that Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام adhered to the way of Sayyidnā Nūḥ عليه السلام, the prophet preceding him, and that there was a perfect agreement between them on the basic principles of faith - and it is also possible that the religious codes they had could also be the same, or similar. Let us bear in mind that, according to some historical narratives, there is a gap of two thousand six hundred and forty years between them, and there was no prophet except Sayyidnā Hūd and Sayyidnā Ṣaliḥ عليه السلام during this period. (Kashshaf, p. 48, v. 4)

In verse 84, it was said: إِذْ جَآءَ رَبَّهُ بِقَلْبٍ سَلِيمٍ (when he came to his Lord with a pure heart,). Here, 'coming to his Lord' means 'to turn to Allah, to zero in one's attention towards Him and to worship Him.' By placing the restriction of 'with a pure heart' it has been indicated that no act of devotion (*'ibādah*) to Allah is acceptable until the heart of the devotee is cleansed pure from false beliefs and ill intentions. If a certain act of devotion is performed while laced with some false belief, then, no matter how hard the devotee has worked in this process, it will still not be acceptable. Similarly, if the main purpose of the devotee happens not to be the seeking of the sole pleasure of Allah - but, is a simple show off or some material gain, then, that act of devotion is not praiseworthy. The

passion with which Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام turned towards Allah was free of all such adulterations.

In verses 88 and 89, it was said: فَنَظَرَ نَظْرَةً فِى النُّجُوْمِ فَقَالَ اِنِّىْ سَقِيْمٌ (Then, he cast a look at the stars, and then said, "I feel indisposed" 37:88-89). There is a background to these verses. The people of Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام used to have a festival on a particular day. When that day came, they invited Sayyidnā Ibrahim to go with them and enjoy the festival. Their purpose was that if he accompanies them in the festival, he might be impressed with them and forget about calling them to his faith. (ad-Durr-ul-Manthūr, Ibn Jarīr and others). But, Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام had something else on his mind. He wanted to make use of this occasion to pursue an agenda of his own. He thought when all these people go to celebrate their festival, he would have the time to go into their temple and break their idols, so that when they returned, they would see the helplessness of their false gods with their own eyes. It was quite possible that this scenario makes someone's heart lit with the spark of true faith and, may be, he repents and shies away from shirk. This being his aim, Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام refused to go with them. But, he chose a particular method of saying 'no' to his people when he cast a full, animated look at the stars (expressed in the text by saying: فِى النُّجُوْمِ [*fī-n-nujūm*: into the stars] as explained below) and then said that he was indisposed. His people took his excuse to be valid, left him alone and went away to enjoy their festival.

Several exegetic and juristic issues are related with this event. A gist is being presented here.

The purpose of casting a glance at the stars

The first debatable issue is to determine the purpose for which Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام cast a glance at the stars before he could give an answer. Some commentators have said that this happened as a matter of chance. When someone has something important on his mind, there are occasions he would start looking at the sky quite unintentionally. At the time Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام was invited to come to the festival, he was left thinking as to how could he excuse himself out of this invitation. It was in this state of indecision that he, quite involuntarily, cast a glance towards the stars and, only after that, came his response. This explanation of casting a glance towards the stars apparently seems to be

cloudless. But, in view of the style of the noble Qur'ān, it is difficult to call it correct. First of all because the style of the Qur'ān is such that it limits itself to the narration of only important and necessary units of events while it leaves off details that are unnecessary . Even in these very verses under study, several units of the events have been elided to the extent that its entire background was also not spelt out. Therefore, it is not possible to believe that the Qur'ān would have left out the background of this event, lest it becomes too long while it would take an absolutely involuntary action not even distantly related to the event and describe it in a whole verse. Secondly, if no particular wise consideration was in sight while casting a glance towards the stars, instead, it had happened involuntarily - then, according to the grammatical rules of the Arabic language, one would say: فَنَظَرَ نَظْرَةً إِلَى النُّجُومِ and not: فِي النُّجُومِ as in the text.

This tells us that Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام did have some particular expedient consideration before him in having a glance at the stars, and that is why the noble Qur'ān has mentioned it with such stress on its importance. Now the question is: What was that expedient consideration? In answer, most commentators have said that the people of Ibrāhīm عليه السلام believed in astrology and used to do everything they had to do by looking at stars. The purpose behind the answer that Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام gave by looking at the stars was to let his people understand that the statement being given by Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام about his indisposition was not something unfounded, instead, what he was saying was being said on the basis of his assessment of the movement of stars. Although, Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام was not a believer in astrology personally, but the method he used functionally in order to avoid his participation in the festival was precisely what would appear trustworthy in their sight - and since he made no reference to astrology verbally, nor did he declare that his aim was to seek help from his knowledge of stars - instead, what he did was no more than having looked at the stars rather fully - therefore, this also had no aspect of some lie in it.

Here, one may doubt that this act of Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام might have encouraged disbelievers who were not only believers in astrology, in fact, took stars to be effective agents in the events of the world. But, this doubt can be answered by saying that the likelihood of an encouragement was possible only when Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام would have not clearly

warned them on their erroneous conduct later on. Here, this entire plan was being enacted for the sole purpose that the invitation to pure monotheism be communicated to them in the most effective manner possible. Hence, it was after a short while that Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام laid bare every possible error of their conduct before his people. Therefore, there is no question of providing encouragement to disbelievers simply on the basis of this ambiguous act. Here the purpose was to get rid of the compulsion of having to participate in the festival so that effort could be made to create a conducing atmosphere to present the call of true faith. This method of considered ambiguity for the purpose in sight is based on nothing but wisdom - and no reasonable objection can be raised against it.

This explanation of casting a glance towards the stars has been reported from most commentators. Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānavi has also gone by this very Tafsīr in Bayān-ul-Qur'ān.

Astrology: Its status in Islam

Another question which comes under this verse relates to the status astrology has in the Sharī'ah of Islam. A brief answer to this question is being submitted here.

At least this much is a settled matter that Allah Ta'ālā has placed specific properties in the Moon, Sun and the stars that affect human lives. Some of these are such as could be observed by everyone, for instance, the feeling of being hot or cold due to the Sun being near and far or the high and low tides of the seas due to the waxing and waning of the Moon and similar other phenomena. Now, some commentators just limit themselves to saying that the properties of these stars are no more than what we can gather from common observation - while there are others who say that there are some additional and particular properties in the position and movement of stars which affect most human matters. The moving of some star in a particular constellation becomes for some human beings the cause of happiness and success while the cause of sorrow and failure for some others. Then there are some people who believe that stars are the sole effective agents in the case of all successes and failures. And there are still others who say that there is no effective agent but Allah Ta'ālā, however, He has endowed stars with such properties, therefore, very much like other causes, they too serve as yet another cause of human successes and failures.

As for those who believe in stars being effective agents, and hold that events and revolutions of the world depend on stars alone, and they alone decide what happens in the world - their notion is wrong and false without any doubt. In fact, this belief takes one to the borderline of *shirk* (the ascribing of partners to the pristine divinity of Allah). This was the kind of belief the people of Arabia entertained in the matter of rains. According to them, a particular star (called: نوء : *naw'*) brought rains and it was an effective agent as far as rains are concerned. The Holy Prophet ﷺ has strongly refuted this belief the detailed description of which appears in *aḥādīth*.

Now, there remains the thinking of people who, for all intents and purposes, do believe that Allah Ta'ālā is the ultimate effective agent in world events, yet they also subscribe to the view that the Almighty has endowed stars with such properties which affect human lives in the degree of a general cause. For example, as far as rain is concerned, it is Allah alone who brings it, but clouds happen to be the obvious cause of rains. Similarly, the real fountainhead of all successes and failures is no other but the will of Allah Ta'ālā. But, these stars become the cause of those successes and failures. Hence, this thinking is no *shirk* - and neither do the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth confirm or reject it. Therefore, it is not too far out to think that Allah Ta'ālā might as well have embedded some such effects in the position, movement, rising and setting of stars. But, the acquiring of the knowledge of astrology in order to pursue and discover these effects, and then placing reliance on this knowledge, and then issuing decrees for the future on that basis is, after all, prohibited and impermissible and *aḥādīth* forbid it. According to a narration of Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd رضي الله عنه, the Holy Prophet ﷺ said:

إِذَا ذُكِرَ الْقَدَرُ فَأَمْسِكُوا وَإِذَا ذُكِرَتِ النُّجُومُ فَأَمْسِكُوا وَإِذَا ذُكِرَ أَصْحَابِي فَأَمْسِكُوا

(تخریج احیاء العلوم للعراقی بحوالۂ طبرانی وھو حدیث حسنہ العراقی)

> When destiny is mentioned - observe restraint; and when stars are mentioned - observe restraint; and when my Companions are mentioned - observe restraint [that is, do not deliberate or debate or dwell on differences]. 'Iraqi on Iḥyā'-ul-'Ulum, with reference to Ṭabarānī, and rating as 'ḥasan')

And Sayyidnā 'Umar رضي الله عنه said:

تَعَلَّمُوا مِنَ النُّجُومِ مَا تَهْتَدُوْنَ بِهِ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ ثُمَّ اَمْسِكُوْا (احياء علوم الدين للغزالیؒ)

Acquire knowledge of stars to the extent you are guided right on land and at sea - then, stop. ('Iḥyā'-ul-'Ulum -Ghazzālī)

This prohibition does not necessitate rejection of properties and effects of stars. But, any relentless digging into these properties and effects - and wasting precious time while hankering after these is what has been prohibited. Imām al-Ghazali has, while discussing this subject in Iḥyā'-ul-'Ulum, identified several elements of wisdom behind this prohibition.

The first wise consideration under which astrology has been declared as blameworthy and prohibited lies in a person's accelerated devotion to it. Experience bears out that once this happens, he gradually starts taking stars as the be-all and end-all of everything, and this false perception then drags him on to the polytheistic belief of taking stars as the real effective agents.

Then there is yet another wise consideration behind it. Even if Allah Ta'ālā has placed some properties and effects in the stars, we have, on our part, no certain source of knowledge about these, except through wahy or revelation. It appears in *aḥādīth* about Sayyidnā Idrīs عليه السلام (Enoch) that Allah Ta'ālā had given him some knowledge of this nature. But, that knowledge based on Divine revelation (*waḥy*) is no more there in this world. Now, whatever the so-called experts of astrology have with them is merely a collection of inferences, conjectures and whims based on which no certain knowledge can be acquired. This is the reason why countless predictions of astrologers keep being proved false. Someone has made a lively comment on this field of knowledge by saying:

مفیدہ غیر معلوم و معلومہ غیر مفید

The useful of it is unknown, and the known of it is useless!

'Allāmah 'Ālusi has, in his Tafsīr Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī, has cited several examples from historical events where the way an event should have transpired under the accepted rules of astrology came, in reality, to transpire almost contrarily. Therefore, so many great people that devoted their lives to astrology were finally compelled to confess that the ultimate end of this field of knowledge is no more than conjectures and estimations.

A famous astrologer, Koshyar Dailami has written in his book al-Mujmal fi-l-Ahkam:

> "Astrology is a field of knowledge not supported by evidence, proof, or argument. It has a lot of leeway for human scruples and conjectures." (Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī, p. 116, v. 23)

'Allāmah 'Ālūsi has also reported similar sayings from several other scholars of astrology. Nevertheless, this much is settled that astrology is not a field of knowledge that could offer any degree of certainty. Countless probabilities of errors lurk behind it. But, what actually happens is that people who pursue this field of knowledge end up giving it status of a science that is absolute and certain. On this very basis they arrive at their decrees for the future, and because of it they go on to entertain good or bad opinions about others. Moreover, far serious is the false pride in this field that, on some occasions, pushes its votaries to start claiming that they have the knowledge of the unseen (*al-ghayb*). And it goes without saying that everything pointed to here generates all sorts of corruption.

There is yet another reason for the prohibition of astrology in that it amounts to allowing dear life to be consumed in a pursuit that has no benefit in the real sense. When one cannot have something certain come out of it, how is it going to be helpful in doing so many things one has to do in this world? Now, running after something useless for no valid reason is totally against the spirit and temperament of the Shari'ah of Islam. Therefore, it has been prohibited.

How to explain the 'indisposition' of Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام ?

The third problem that emerges from this verse relates to the statement of Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام. In response to the invitation of his people, he said: إِنِّى سَقِيمٌ (I feel indisposed). Now the question is: Was he really sick at that time? In the Qur'ān, there is no clarification about it. But, from a Ḥadīth of the Ṣaḥīḥ of al-Bukhārī it seems that he was not so sick at that time as would make him unable to go with his people. Therefore, we have to determine as to how could he say that.

The answer to that, according to the majority of commentators, is that Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام had really employed the mode of توریہ : *tauriyah* (equivocation). Tauriyah means: 'To say something that is apparently

counter to the actual fact, but the speaker means a remote sense in it that matches the actual fact.' Here, the apparent sense of the remark made by Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm ﷺ is that 'Right now, I am sick.' But, this is not what he really meant. Now, what did he really mean? About this, commentators have expressed different opinions. Some said that it was prompted by his instinctive aversion at the sight of the polytheistic activities of his people. This view is supported by the fact that the word used here is: سَقِيم (*'saqim':* indisposed), a word that is much lighter than: مَرِيض (*marīḍ* : sick). This sense could be conveyed in English by saying: I am indisposed (as in the translation of the text). It is obvious that this sentence has ample room to incorporate the sense of instinctive aversion alluded to earlier.

And some commentators have said that by saying: اِنِّیْ سَقِیْمٌ (*inni saqīm*), Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm ﷺ intended to convey the sense of 'I am going to be sick' for the reason that, in the Arabic language, the form of active participle noun (*ism-u-l-fa'il*) is frequently used for the future tense. In the Qur'ān itself, it was said while addressing the Holy Prophet ﷺ: اِنَّکَ مَیِّتٌ وَّاِنَّهُم مَّیِّتُوْنَ (which can be literally translated in terms of the outwardly apparent words by saying: 'You too are dead and they too are dead.' But, as obvious, it means: "Certainly, you will die and they [too] will die - (Az-Zumar, 39:30). Similarly, Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm ﷺ had said: اِنِّی سَقِیْمٌ (inni saqim) only to convey the sense of 'I am going to be sick' and he said that because one has to fall sick some or the other time much before death comes. Even if someone does not suffer from a regular sickness, even then, one is temperamentally disturbed before death that is something inevitable.

If someone is not satisfied with these interpretations, then the best explanation is that Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm ﷺ was really somewhat indisposed at that time, but his indisposition was not such as would have prevented him from participating in the festival Actually, he talked about his casual indisposition in a particular setting where his listeners thought he was suffering from some major disease because of which he was really unable to go with them. This explanation of the equivocation used by Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm ﷺ is most reasonable and satisfactory.

This explication also makes it clear that the use of the word: کَذِبَة(*kadhibah*: lie) for the statement: اِنِّیْ سَقِیْمٌ (inni saqim) uttered by

Sayyidnā Ibrahim, as is reported in the Ḥadīth of Bukhārī, actually means " (توریه : equivocation) which has the apparent form of a lie but it is no lie in terms of the sense intended by the speaker. In some narrations of this very Ḥadīth, the following words have also appeared:

مَا مِنْهَا كَذِبَةٌ اِلَّا مَاحَلَّ بِهَا عَنْ دِيْنِ اللّٰهِ

Out of these, there is no lie that has not been spoken for the sake of defending and supporting the religion of Allah.

These words are self-explanatory. They tell us that the word *'kadhib'* or lie in the Ḥadīth carries a sense that is separate from its common meaning. A slightly detailed discussion regarding this very Ḥadīth has already appeared in the commentary on Sūrah Al-Anbiyā' under the verse: قَالَ بَلْ فَعَلَهُ ' كَبِيْرُهُمْ (He said Rather, this is done by this chief of theirs - 21:63). (Ma'āriful-Qur'ān, volume VI)

The Islamic legal ruling on (equivocation)

Also from these very verses comes the ruling that resorting to tauriyah on occasions of need is permissible. One form of *tauriyah* is verbal, that is, saying something the apparent sense of which is counter to the actual fact, while the inward sense corresponds to it. Then there is the practical *tauriyah,* that is, to act in a manner that makes the onlooker interpret one's intention in a certain way while, in reality, one's intention is quite different. This is also known as: اِیْہَام (*'iham*). When Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام cast a glance towards the stars, it was 'iham. (as held by most commentators) and calling himself sick was *tauriyah* or equivocation.

On specific occasions of need, resorting to both these kinds of *tauriyah* stands proved from the Holy Prophet ﷺ in person. When he was on his journey of *hijrah*, and the disbelievers were looking for him frantically, someone en route asked Sayyidnā Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه about the Holy Prophet ﷺ. He answered by saying: هُوَهَادٍ يَّهْدِيْنِی (He is my guide. He shows me the way). From his answer, the listener gathered that he was referring to him as some usual pathfinder or guide (hired for this purpose in travel through unknown desert terrain). Therefore, he did not bother and went his way - although, Sayyidnā Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه had still not surrendered the truth of the matter that he was his religious and spiritual guide or leader.

Similarly , says Sayyidnā Ka'b Ibn Mālik رضي الله عنه, 'when the Holy Prophet

ﷺ had to go in a certain direction for Jihad, he would, while coming out of Madīnah, rather than go in his intended direction, would start marching towards some other direction - so that onlookers do not find out the correct destination towards which he was really headed (Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim and others). This was practical tauriyah (equivocation) and *'ihām*.

On occasions of good cheer and light humor too, *tauriyah* stands proved from the Holy Prophet ﷺ. According to narration from the Shamā'il of Tirmidhī, the Holy Prophet ﷺ humorously said to an old woman, "No old woman will go to Paradise." That woman became very anxious. Then he explained that he meant that the old women will not go Paradise in the state of their old age - yes, they will go there after having turned young.

Verses 99 - 113

وَقَالَ اِنِّیْ ذَاهِبٌ اِلٰی رَبِّیْ سَیَهْدِیْنِ ﴿۹۹﴾ رَبِّ هَبْ لِیْ مِنَ
الصّٰلِحِیْنَ ﴿۱۰۰﴾ فَبَشَّرْنٰهُ بِغُلٰمٍ حَلِیْمٍ ﴿۱۰۱﴾ فَلَمَّا بَلَغَ مَعَهُ السَّعْیَ
قَالَ یٰبُنَیَّ اِنِّیْ اَرٰی فِی الْمَنَامِ اَنِّیْ اَذْبَحُكَ فَانْظُرْ مَاذَا تَرٰی ؕ قَالَ
یٰۤاَبَتِ افْعَلْ مَا تُؤْمَرُ سَتَجِدُنِیْۤ اِنْ شَآءَ اللّٰهُ مِنَ الصّٰبِرِیْنَ ﴿۱۰۲﴾
فَلَمَّاۤ اَسْلَمَا وَتَلَّهٗ لِلْجَبِیْنِ ﴿۱۰۳﴾ وَنَادَیْنٰهُ اَنْ یّٰۤاِبْرٰهِیْمُ ﴿۱۰۴﴾ قَدْ
صَدَّقْتَ الرُّءْیَا ۚ اِنَّا كَذٰلِكَ نَجْزِی الْمُحْسِنِیْنَ ﴿۱۰۵﴾ اِنَّ هٰذَا لَهُوَ
الْبَلٰٓؤُا الْمُبِیْنُ ﴿۱۰۶﴾ وَفَدَیْنٰهُ بِذِبْحٍ عَظِیْمٍ ﴿۱۰۷﴾ وَتَرَكْنَا عَلَیْهِ فِی
الْاٰخِرِیْنَ ﴿۱۰۸﴾ سَلٰمٌ عَلٰۤی اِبْرٰهِیْمَ ﴿۱۰۹﴾ كَذٰلِكَ نَجْزِی
الْمُحْسِنِیْنَ ﴿۱۱۰﴾ اِنَّهٗ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا الْمُؤْمِنِیْنَ ﴿۱۱۱﴾ وَبَشَّرْنٰهُ
بِاِسْحٰقَ نَبِیًّا مِّنَ الصّٰلِحِیْنَ ﴿۱۱۲﴾ وَبٰرَكْنَا عَلَیْهِ وَعَلٰۤی اِسْحٰقَ ؕ
وَمِنْ ذُرِّیَّتِهِمَا مُحْسِنٌ وَّظَالِمٌ لِّنَفْسِهٖ مُبِیْنٌ ﴿۱۱۳﴾

And he said, "I am going to my Lord. He will show me the way. [99] **O my Lord, bless me with a righteous son."**

[100] So, We gave him the good news of a forbearing boy. [101] Thereafter, when he reached an age in which he could work with him, he said, "O my little son, I have seen in a dream that I am slaughtering you, so consider, what do you think? " He said, "O my dear father, do what you have been ordered to do. You will find me, insha'Allah, (if Allah wills) one of those who endure patiently." [102] So, (it was a great episode) when both of them submitted themselves (to Allah's will), and he laid him on his forehead [103] and then We called out to him, "O Ibrāhīm, you did make the dream come true." This is how We reward those who are good in deeds. [104] This was indeed a trial that clearly demonstrated (their obedience). [106] And We ransomed him with a great sacrifice. [107] and We left for him (a word of praise) among the later people, [108] (that is,)" Salam be on Ibrahim! [109] This is how We reward those who are good in deeds. [110] Surely, he is among Our believing servants. [111] And We gave him the good news of Isḥāq, a prophet from among the righteous. [112] And We did bless him, and Isḥāq - and among the progeny of both of them, some are good and some are utterly unjust to their own selves. [113]

Commentary

The sacrifice of a son

Another event in the blessed life of Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام has been described in the verses cited above. This is the event of the sacrifice of his first-born son in the way of Allah.

Explanatory Notes on the verses

The first verse (99) opens with the words: وَقَالَ اِنِّیْ ذَاهِبٌ اِلٰی رَبِّیْ ... (And he said, "I am going to my Lord...). Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام said this at a time when he was totally disappointed by his countrymen, for nobody except Sayyidnā Lūṭ عليه السلام, his nephew, was willing to believe in him. The statement: دارالكفر (I am going to my Lord) means that he will leave the abode of disbelief and go to a place whereto Allah Ta'ālā has commanded him to go, a place where he will be able to worship his Lord in peace. So, he started on a journey accompanied by his blessed wife, Sayyidah Sārah رضی اللہ عنہا and his nephew, Sayyidnā Lūṭ. After having passed through different areas of Iraq, he finally reached Syria. Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام had no children until then, therefore, he made the prayer mentioned in the next verse (100).

He said: رَبِّ هَبْ لِيْ مِنَ الصّٰلِحِيْنَ (O my Lord, bless me with a righteous son."- 100). His prayer was answered and Allah Ta'ālā gave him the good news of the birth of a son.

Thus, by saying 'forbearing' in: فَبَشَّرْنٰهُ بِغُلٰمٍ حَلِيْمٍ (So, We gave him the good news of a forbearing boy- 101), it was indicated that this newborn would demonstrate such patience, control and forbearance in his life as would be exemplary in the world. The birth of this son had a background of its own. When Sayyidah Sārah رضی اللہ عنہا realized that she is not being blessed with children, she took herself to be barren. On the other hand, the Pharaoh had given his daughter named Hajirah as gift to Sayyidah Sārah, so that she could help her in household chores. Sayyidah Sārah passed on this very Hajirah as gift to Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام who married her. Then the son mentioned here was born to this Hajirah and he was named Isma'īl عليه السلام.

In verse 102, it was said: فَلَمَّا بَلَغَ مَعَهُ السَّعْيَ قَالَ يٰبُنَيَّ اِنِّيْۤ اَرٰى فِي الْمَنَامِ اَنِّيْۤ اَذْبَحُكَ (Thereafter, when he reached an age in which he could work with him, he said, "O my little son, I have seen in a dream that I am slaughtering you, so consider, what do you think?"). From some narrations, it appears that this dream was shown to Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام for three consecutive days (Qurṭubī). Then, it already stands settled that the dream of blessed prophets is a revelation (*waḥy*). Therefore, this dream meant that Allah Ta'ālā was asking Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام to slaughter his firstborn son. For that matter, this command could have been revealed directly through an angel. But, the wisdom behind communicating it through a dream was to unravel the obedience of Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام at its most sublime form. A command given through a dream could have a lot of room for interpretations and excuses by the human self. But, this was Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام. He did not take to the way of excuses. On the contrary, he simply bowed down (sans interpretations, sans hesitations) before the command of his Lord. (Tafsīr Kabīr)

In addition to that, the purpose of the great Creator here was neither to have Sayyidnā Isma'īl عليه السلام be slaughtered actually, nor was it to make it binding upon Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام that he slaughters him ultimately, instead, the purpose was to give the command that he should, on his part, do everything necessary to slaughter him and take all steps leading to his slaughter. Now, had this command been given to him

verbally, it would disclose that the actual slaughter is not intended, and the element of test would have remained missing. Therefore, he was shown in a dream that he was slaughtering his son. From this Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام understood that what he was been commanded with is slaughter - and he was all set for it literally and comprehensively. Thus, the element of trial went the full circle, and the dream also came true. So, as said earlier, if this thing were to come through a verbal command, either there would have been no test, or the command would have to be abrogated afterwards.

How hard this test was! It is to allude to this aspect that Allah Ta'ālā has placed additional words in the statement here: فَلَمَّا بَلَغَ مَعَهُ السَّعْيَ (Thereafter, when he reached an age in which he could work with him, - 102). In other words, it could be said that he was commanded to sacrifice his son he had so wistfully prayed for at a time when this son was old enough to walk by the side of his father, and the days when he could become the right arm of his father were not far. Commentators say that the age of Sayyidnā Isma'īl عليه السلام was thirteen years at that time. Some others say that he had crossed the age of puberty. (Tafsīr Maẓharī)

In the next sentence of verse 102, it was said: فَانْظُرْ مَاذَا تَرٰى (So consider, what do you think?) When Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام posed this question before Sayyidnā Isma'īl عليه السلام he really had no hesitation about carrying out the Divine command. In fact, he wanted to accomplish two things by doing so. Firstly, he wanted to test his son as to the extent to which he was ready to face this trial. Secondly, the noble prophets عليهم السلام always have a way of their own - they are prepared to carry out Divine commands at all times. But, they always opt for methods that are suitable in such obedience, methods that are based on wisdom and all possible convenience. Had Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام started laying down his son in readiness for slaughter without having said any thing to him or having heard any thing from him in advance, it would have caused difficulties for both of them. Now, this thing that he said to him was in the spirit and manner of a tender consultation with his son. What he intended thereby was to let his son become aware of the command of Allah in advance, so that he is all prepared to endure the pain of being slaughtered well before the zero hour comes. Moreover, even if there emerged some hesitation in the heart of his son, there will still be the time to make him understand

the situation. (Rūḥ-ul- Ma'ānī and Bayān-ul-Qur'ān)

But, that son was no less than the son of the Friend of Allah, and the one who himself was bound to rise to the office and station of a prophet. In his answer, he said: يٰۤاَبَتِ افْعَلْ مَا تُؤْمَرُ (O my dear father, do what you have been ordered to do - 102). Not only that this statement provides an evidence of the unique passion of Sayyidnā Isma'īl عليه السلام to surrender his life in the way of Allah, it also shows the kind of intelligence and knowledge Allah Ta'ālā had blessed him with at such a tender age. It should be borne in mind that Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام had not referred to any command from Allah before him, in fact, had mentioned a dream only. But, Sayyidnā Isma'īl عليه السلام got the point. He understood that the dream of a prophet is a revelation (*waḥy*) - and this dream too was, in reality, a form of Divine command as such. Hence, in his response, rather than mention the dream, he referred to the Divine order.

The proof of 'revelation not recited' (وحی غیرمتلو : *waḥy ghayr matluww*)

Right from here comes a clear refutation of those who deny the authority of Ḥadīth and who do not accept the existence of any revelation that is not recited. They say that wahy or revelation is only that which has been revealed in the Scripture, the Book of Allah - other than that, no other form or kind of revelation exists. You have already noticed that the command to sacrifice his son was given to Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام through a dream, and Sayyidnā Isma'īl عليه السلام had declared it to be the command of Allah in very clear words. Now, if 'the revelation not recited' (*waḥy ghayr matluww*) is nothing, then where did this command come from and in which Scriptures was it revealed?

After that, Sayyidnā Isma'īl عليه السلام also gave an assurance to his great father from his own side by saying: سَتَجِدُنِيْٓ اِنْ شَآءَ اللّٰهُ مِنَ الصّٰبِرِيْنَ (You will find me, *insha'Allah,* [if Allah wills] one of those who endure patiently."- 102). Just look at the extreme etiquette and modesty demonstrated by Sayyidnā Isma'īl عليه السلام in this brief statement of his. First of all, by saying "*insha'Allah*" (if Allah wills), he entrusted the matter with Allah Ta'ālā, and thus he eliminated any flair of having made a boastful claim through this promise. Then, he could have also said: 'You will, *insha'Allah,* find me enduring.' But, he did not say that. What he actually said was: "You will find me one of those who endure patiently."). Thereby he released the

hint that all this endurance and patience is no feat of his all alone, rather, there have been many more of those who have been enduring and patient - *insha'Allah*, he too will hope to become one of them. Thus, through this statement, he eliminated the possibility of any traces of pride, arrogance, egotism and conceit, rather replaced it with the finest in manners and modesty. (Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī) From here we learn the lesson that no matter how much confidence one has in one's own self, he should never make tall claims that smack of pride and bragging. If there is a compulsive need to have to say something of this nature, due attention should be paid to the choice of words that are being said. The best course is to shift the focus from one's own person and say what shows trust in Allah. In manners and attitudes too, one should try not to cut loose from the norms of modesty to the best of one's ability.

The word: أَسْلَمَ (*aslama*: both of them submitted) in verse 103: فَلَمَّآ اَسْلَمَا means to submit, bow down, become obedient, rendered ready to carry out the command. Hence, it releases the sense of having bowed down before the Divine command, that is, in plain words, the father resolved to slaughter the son and the son, to be slaughtered by him. At this place, the word used is: لَمَّا (*lamma*: when), but its apodosis or the complement of the condition has not been mentioned - in other words, it has not been said later on as to what happened when this thing came to pass. This releases a hint towards the uniqueness of this bold initiative of self-submission undertaken by the father and son - so unique that words just fail to convey a fuller description.

Some historical and exegetical reports tell us that the Shaitan tried to seduce Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام away from it three times and every time Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام pelted seven pebbles on him, and drove him away. Right through up to this day, on the three pillars of Minā, pebbles are thrown to commemorate this very endearing act. Finally, when both father and son reached the place of slaughter to offer this unique act of worship, Sayyidnā Isma'īl عليه السلام said to his father, "My dear father, tie me down well enough so that my body may not toss and turn too much; and also keep your dress protected, lest the drops of my blood spoil it which might reduce my reward with Allah, and moreover, if my mother were to see this blood, she will be virtually smitten with sorrow. And sharpen your knife, and run it fast over my throat, so that my last breath comes easy on

me, for death is hard; and when you return to my mother, pay my respects to her and should you wish to take my shirt to her, you are welcome to do so, may be it would give her the comfort she needs." Hearing these words coming from the lips of the only son a father has, who can imagine what would have been going on in his heart. But, here was Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام. Like a mountain of fortitude, he says to his son, "Son, what a good helper you are for me in this task assigned by Allah." Saying this, he kissed his son and, with wet eyes, he tied him. (Maẓharī)

And then came the stage about which the text says: وَتَلَّهٗ لِلْجَبِيْنِ (and he laid him on his forehead - 103). According to an explanation of this statement as reported from Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه, 'he laid him down on his side in a manner that one edge of the forehead was touching the ground' (Maẓharī). Lexically, this explanation is weightier for the reason that the word: جَبِيْن (*jabīn*) is applied to the two curvatures of the forehead while the middle part of the forehead is called: جَبْهَة (*jabhah*). Therefore, Moulānā Thānavi has translated it carrying the sense of 'laying down on the side.' But, other respected commentators have explained it as 'laid him down on the ground face down.' Whatever be the case, the reason given in historical accounts for this manner of laying him down is that, initially, Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام had laid him down face up. But, once he started moving the knife on his throat, it would not cut despite repeated efforts, because a copper plate had come as a barrier in between by the will of Allah. At that time, the son himself requested his father that he be laid down on the side face down for the reason that once he looked at him, his filial compassion unnerved his hand, and the throat is not cut as required. In addition to that, he said, when he looked at the knife, he too started feeling nervous. So Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام started using his knife in the manner he was told (Tafsīr Maẓharī). Allah knows best.

In verse 104, 105, it was said: وَنَادَيْنٰهُ اَنْ يّٰۤاِبْرٰهِيْمُ قَدْ صَدَّقْتَ الرُّءْيَا (and then We called out to him, "O Ibrāhīm, you did make the dream come true."), that is, in accomplishing the task entrusted with him in obedience to the command of Allah, he left nothing undone, in fact, did it perfectly to the letter (more likely so because in the dream too, it was shown that Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام is simply moving his knife to slaughter his son). Now that test was over, so he should let him go.

By saying: إِنَّا كَذَٰلِكَ نَجْزِى الْمُحْسِنِينَ (This is how We reward those who are good in deeds - 110), the sense is, 'when a servant of Allah bows down before the command of Allah and is ready to sacrifice all personal thoughts and feelings, then, ultimately, We take care of him, so that he remains safe from whatever could have afflicted him here in this world, and as for the recompense and reward of the Hereafter, that We write down in his book of deeds.'

In verse 107, it was said: وَفَدَيْنَٰهُ بِذِبْحٍ عَظِيمٍ (And We ransomed him with a great sacrifice.). In Ḥadīth reports, it is said that on hearing this voice from the heavens, Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام looked up and saw Sayyidnā Jibrā'il with a ram. From some reports, it appears that it was the same ram that was offered as sacrifice by Hābil (Abel), the son of Sayyidnā 'Ādam عليه السلام. Allah knows best. In short, a present of this ram of Paradise was made to Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام, and he sacrificed it in lieu of his son as commanded by Allah. This sacrificial animal was called: عَظِيمٍ (*'aẓīm*: great) because it had come by way of mercy from Allah, and no one can entertain any doubt about the acceptance of its sacrifice. (Tafsīr Maẓharī, and others)

Which son was to be slaughtered? Was it Sayyidnā Isma'īl عليه السلام? Or, was it Sayyidnā Isḥāq?

The Tafsīr of the verses cited above has been described on the assumption that the son who was to be slaughtered was Sayyidnā Isma'īl عليه السلام. But, the truth of the matter is that there is a severe difference of opinion among commentators and historians about it. That this son was Sayyidnā Isḥāq عليه السلام has been reported from among the Ṣaḥābah by Sayyidnā 'Umar, Sayyidnā 'Alī, Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd, Sayyidnā 'Abbās, Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Abbās and Sayyidnā Ka'b al-Aḥbār رضي الله عنهم, and from among the Tabi'īn by Sa'īd Ibn Jubayr, Qatādah, Masrīq, 'Ikrimah, 'Aṭā', Muqātil, Zuhri and Suddiyy رحمهم الله تعالى Counter to this is the narrations from Sayyidnā 'Alī, Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās, Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Umar, Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah and Sayyidnā Abū-ṭ-Ṭufayl from among the Ṣaḥābah, and Sa'īd Ibn Musaiyyab, Sa'īd Ibn Jubayr, Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, Mujāhid, 'Umar Ibn 'Abd-ul-'Azīz, Sha'bi, Muḥammad Ibn Ka'b al-Qurazi from among the Tabi'īn from whom it has been reported that that this son was Sayyidnā Isma'īl عليه السلام. It is to be noted that the names of Sayyidnā 'Alī, Ibn 'Abbās and Sa;id ibn Jubayr

appear in both groups. This is because reports of both views are attributed to them. (Usmānī)

Out of the latter commentators, Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Jarīr at-Ṭabarī has preferred the first view, while Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Kathīr and others have not only gone by the second view, but have also refuted the first one. Here, it is not possible to present a critique of arguments advanced by the two groups. Nevertheless, in terms of the descriptive arrangement of the noble Qur'ān and the strength of Ḥadīth narrations, the weightier view seems to be that the son of Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام who was commanded to be slaughtered was but Sayyidnā Isma'īl عليه السلام. Relevant proof appears below:

1. After having reported the whole event relating to the sacrifice, the noble Qur'ān says in verse 112: وَبَشَّرْنٰهُ بِإِسْحٰقَ نَبِيًّا مِّنَ الصّٰلِحِيْنَ (And We gave him the good news of Isḥāq, a prophet from among the righteous). This clearly tells us that the son who was to be sacrificed under Divine command was someone else - other than Sayyidnā Isḥāq - and the glad tidings of the birth of Sayyidnā Isḥāq عليه السلام was given after the event of the sacrifice.

2. Mentioned in this very glad tidings relating to Sayyidnā Isḥāq عليه السلام is that he will be a prophet. In addition to this, it has been said in another verse that along with the glad tidings of the birth of Sayyidnā Isḥāq عليه السلام, it was also said that, later on, Sayyidnā Isḥāq will have a son - Sayyidnā Ya'qūb عليه السلام: فَبَشَّرْنٰهَا بِإِسْحٰقَ وَمِنْ وَّرَآءِ إِسْحٰقَ يَعْقُوْبَ (so, We gave her the good news about Isḥāq, and about Ya'qūb after Isḥāq - Hud, 11:71). It clearly shows that he will live a long life to the extent that he will be blessed with an offspring. How could he, then, be commanded to slaughter that very offspring - before becoming a prophet - which would have given Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام the understanding that he has to become a prophet and the birth of Sayyidnā Ya'qūb عليه السلام is due to come from his loins, therefore, the act of slaughtering cannot bring death to him. It is obvious that, in this situation, neither would this have been some major trial, nor had Sayyidnā Ibrahim been deserving of any praise on its implementation. This element of trial is possible only in a situation that Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام fully realizes that his son will die as a result of this act of slaughtering, and only then he takes the initiative of slaughtering him. This whole thing perfectly falls into place in the case of Sayyidnā Isma'īl عليه السلام, because Allah Ta'ālā had made no prediction about his remaining alive and becoming a prophet.

3. From the statement of the Qur'ān it seems that the son who was to be slaughtered under Divine command was the first son of Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام. Therefore, while migrating from his homeland, he had prayed for a son. In answer to this prayer, he was given the good news that he will have a son who will be forbearing. Then, about this very boy it was said that, by the time he grew old enough to work with his father, came the Divine order that he be slaughtered. This whole chain of events is telling us that this boy was the first son of Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام. Now, it was Isma'īl عليه السلام who was the first son of Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام, while Sayyidnā Isḥāq عليه السلام was his second son. After that, no doubt remains about the fact that the son who was to be slaughtered under Divine order was but Sayyidnā Isma'īl عليه السلام.

4. Then, it is also nearly settled that this event of the sacrifice of a son has come to pass within the environs of Makkah al-Mukarramah. It is for this reason that the custom of sacrifice during the period of Ḥajj pilgrimage prevailed among the people of Arabia. In addition to that, the horns of the ram sent from Paradise as ransom for the son of Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام have remained hanging in the Holy Ka'bah for years. Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Kathīr has reported several narrations in support, and has gone on to even quote 'Amir Sha'bi as saying: 'I have personally seen the horns of this ram in the Ka'bah' (Ibn Kathīr, p. 18, v. 4). And Sufyan says: 'The horns of this ram remained hanging in the Ka'bah continuously until when (during the time of Ḥajjāj Ibn Yūsuf) there was a fire in Ka'bah during which these horns were also burnt to ashes' (Ibn Kathīr, p. 17, v. 2). Now it becomes fairly obvious that Sayyidnā Isma'īl عليه السلام was the one living in Makkah al-Mukarramah - not Sayyidnā Isḥāq عليه السلام. Therefore, it is equally obvious that the command to slaughter related but to Sayyidnā Isma'īl عليه السلام - and not to Sayyidnā Isḥāq عليه السلام.

As for the narrations in which it has been said that different Ṣaḥāabah and tabi'in have declared Sayyidnā Isḥāq عليه السلام as the *dhabih* (the one to be slaughtered), Ibn Kathīr has said:

> 'Allah knows best, but evidently all these sayings have come from Ka'b al-Aḥbār. When he embraced Islam during the period of Sayyidnā 'Umar رضي الله عنه, he started telling him reports from his old (Jewish) books. On occasions, Sayyidnā 'Umar listened to what he had to say. This provided room for others too. They too heard his

narrations and started passing them on. These narrations were a bunch of absurdities. This ummah does not need even one word out of it. Allah knows best. - Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr, p. 17, v. 4)

This reasoning of Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Kathīr is fairly acceptable, because the basis of taking Sayyidnā Isḥāq عليه السلام to be the *dhabih* (the one to be slaughtered) rests on Isra'ilite reports that take Sayyidnā Isḥāq عليه السلام as dhabih instead of Sayyidnā Isma'īl عليه السلام. This event has been described in the current Bible in the following words:

> "After these things God tested Abraham, and said to him, 'Abraham,' And he said, 'Here am I.' He said, 'Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering upon one of the mountains of which I shall tell you." (Genesis 22: 1,2)

Here, the event of the slaughter has been attributed to Sayyidnā Isḥāq عليه السلام. But, a little justice and proper investigation would reveal that the Jews have, following their traditional prejudice, interpolated in the text of the Torah - because, the word "your only son" in the very text of Genesis quoted above is telling us that the son whose sacrifice Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام was ordered to make was his 'only' son. Later on, in the chapter, it also appears:

> "you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me." (Genesis 22:12)

In this sentence too, it is explicitly said that this son was the 'only' son of Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام. On the other hand, it is already established that Sayyidnā Isḥāq عليه السلام was not his 'only' son. If the word 'only' can be applied to anyone, it has to be Sayyidnā Isma'īl عليه السلام alone. There are several other textual evidences from the Book of Genesis itself that bear testimony to the fact that the birth of Sayyidnā Isma'īl عليه السلام had taken place much before the birth of Sayyidnā Isḥāq عليه السلام. For example:

> "Now Sarai, Abram's wife, bore him no children. She had an Egyptian maid whose name was Hagar; and Sarai said to Abram, ' Behold now, the Lord has prevented me from bearing children; go in to my maid; it may be that I shall obtain children by her....And he went in to Hagar, and she conceived....And the angel of the Lord said to her, 'Behold, you are with child, and shall bear a son; you shall call his name Ishmael;...Abram was eighty-six years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abram." (Genesis 16: 1-4 and 10-16)

In the next chapter, it appears:

> "And God said to Abraham, 'As for Sarai your wife,...I will bless her, and moreover I will give you a son by her;...Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed, and said to himself, " Shall a child be born to a man who is a hundred years old? Shall Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child? And Abraham said to God, ' O that Ishmael might live in thy sight!' God said, 'No, but Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac." (Genesis 17:15-20)

After that, the birth of Sayyidnā Isḥāq عليه السلام has been described as follows:

> "Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him." (Genesis 21:5)

It becomes very clear from the texts quoted above that Sayyidnā Isḥāq عليه السلام was fourteen years younger than Sayyidnā Isma'īl عليه السلام - and during this period of fourteen years, he was the 'only' son of Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام. Contrary to this, there was no time in the life of Sayyidnā Isḥāq عليه السلام when he could be taken as the 'only' son of his father. Now, after that, when the Book of Genesis mentions the sacrifice of the son in chapter 22, we see that the word 'your only son' as used here is testifying to the fact that it means Sayyidnā Isma'īl عليه السلام while some Jewish scribe has added the word: "Issac" with it so that the line of Isḥāq - and not the line of Isma'īl عليه السلام - receives this honor.

In addition to that, in this very Book of Genesis in the Bible, where Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام has been given the good news of the birth of Sayyidnā Isḥāq عليه السلام, it has also been mentioned there:

> "I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of people shall come from her"(Genesis 17:16) *

Now, in the matter of a son about whom it has already been announced that he will have children and nations will come from his progeny, how can an order be given that he should be sacrificed? This too

*. These extracts are taken from the revised standard version of the Bible published by the British and Foreign Bible Society 1952. And the next sentence in Genesis 17:19 is more clear on the point that the long life of Sayyidnā Isḥāq عليه السلام was predicted well before his birth. It says, " I will establish my covenant with him (Isaac) as an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him." (Muhammad Taqi Usmani)

tells us that this command related to Sayyidnā Isma'īl عليه السلام and not to Sayyidnā Isḥāq عليه السلام.

After having seen these statements in the Bible, one comes to realize the truth of what Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Kathīr has said:

> "It has been clearly stated in the sacred books of the Jewish people that, at the time Sayyidnā Isma'īl عليه السلام was born, the age of Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام was eighty six years and when Sayyidnā Isḥāq عليه السلام was born, his age was one hundred years. Then, it is also written in their books that Allah Ta'ālā had commanded Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام to slaughter his only son - and in another copy of the text, the word "firstborn" has been used instead of "only." So, the Jews have added the word "Isḥāq" on their own by way of malignant imputation. There is no justification in declaring it as correct, because it is counter to what their books clearly say. They have added this word for the reason that Sayyidnā Isḥāq عليه السلام is their venerable forefather, while Sayyidnā Isma'īl عليه السلام is that of the Arabs. So envy drove them to add this word, while now they explain "only" as meaning: "the son, other than whom, there is no one else present with you at that time" - because, Sayyidnā Isma'īl عليه السلام and his mother were not present there at that time (therefore, given that sense, Sayyidnā Isḥāq could be called "only"). But, this interpretation is totally wrong amounting to a distortion of the text, because the word "only" is applied to a son whose father has no son other than him." - Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr, p. 14, v. 4.

The same Ibn Kathīr has also reported that someone from among the Jewish scholars had converted to Islam during the time of the pious caliph, 'Umar Ibn 'Abdul-'Azīz who asked him, "Which of the sons of Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام was it who was commanded to be slaughtered?" He said, "By Allah, O Commander of the faithful, he was Sayyidnā Isma'īl عليه السلام. The Jews know it well. But, they say so because of their envy for you Arabs." (Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr, p. 14, v. 14)

In the light of these proofs, it is almost certain that Sayyidnā Isma'īl عليه السلام was the dhabih (the son Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام was commanded to slaughter). Allah is Pure and He knows best.

In the last verse, it was said: وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِهِمَا مُحْسِنٌ وَّظَالِمٌ لِّنَفْسِهٖ مُبِيْنٌ (and among the progeny of both of them, some are good and some are utterly unjust to their own selves.- 37:113). Refuted through this verse is the false pride of the Jews that being among the progeny of these noble prophets عليهم السلام

is in itself sufficient to bless one with merit and salvation. This verse openly declares that having lineal connection with a man of virtue is not a sufficient guarantee of one's salvation, in fact, this thing depends on one's own beliefs and deeds.

Verses 114 - 122

وَلَقَدْ مَنَنَّا عَلٰى مُوْسٰى وَهٰرُوْنَ ﴿١١٤﴾ وَنَجَّيْنٰهُمَا وَقَوْمَهُمَا مِنَ الْكَرْبِ الْعَظِيْمِ ﴿١١٥﴾ وَنَصَرْنٰهُمْ فَكَانُوْا هُمُ الْغٰلِبِيْنَ ﴿١١٦﴾ وَاٰتَيْنٰهُمَا الْكِتٰبَ الْمُسْتَبِيْنَ ﴿١١٧﴾ وَهَدَيْنٰهُمَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيْمَ ﴿١١٨﴾ وَتَرَكْنَا عَلَيْهِمَا فِى الْاٰخِرِيْنَ ﴿١١٩﴾ سَلٰمٌ عَلٰى مُوْسٰى وَهٰرُوْنَ ﴿١٢٠﴾ اِنَّا كَذٰلِكَ نَجْزِى الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ ﴿١٢١﴾ اِنَّهُمَا مِنْ عِبَادِنَا الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿١٢٢﴾

And We did bestow favors upon Mūsā and Hārūn, [114] **and We delivered them and their people from the great agony,** [115] **and We helped them, so they became victors,** [116] **and We gave them the clear book,** [117] **and guided them to the straight path.** [118] **And We left for them (a word of praise) among the later people ,** [119] **(that is,) Salam on Mūsā and Hārūn!** [120] **This is how We reward those who are good in deeds.** [121] **Surely, both of them are among Our believing servants.** [122]

Commentary

Described in the verses cited above is the third event relating to Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام and Hārūn عليه السلام. It has appeared in details at several places. Here it serves as an indicator. The purpose is to tell how Allah Ta'ālā helps out His sincere and obedient servants, and how He bestows so many of His rewards on them. Mentioned here are His favors bestowed upon Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام and Hārūn عليه السلام. These favors are of two kinds. First come positive favors that bring benefits as in: وَلَقَدْ مَنَنَّا عَلٰى مُوْسٰى وَهٰرُوْنَ (And We did bestow favors upon Mūsā and Hārūn - 37:114). This points out towards those beneficial favors. Then there are negative favors that save from loss or harm. Later verses spell out details of the other kind.

Verses 123 - 132

وَاِنَّ اِلْيَاسَ لَمِنَ الْمُرْسَلِيْنَ ﴿١٢٣﴾ اِذْ قَالَ لِقَوْمِهٖٓ اَلَا تَتَّقُوْنَ ﴿١٢٤﴾
اَتَدْعُوْنَ بَعْلًا وَّتَذَرُوْنَ اَحْسَنَ الْخٰلِقِيْنَ ﴿١٢٥﴾ اللّٰهَ رَبَّكُمْ وَرَبَّ
اٰبَآئِكُمُ الْاَوَّلِيْنَ ﴿١٢٦﴾ فَكَذَّبُوْهُ فَاِنَّهُمْ لَمُحْضَرُوْنَ ﴿١٢٧﴾ اِلَّا عِبَادَ
اللّٰهِ الْمُخْلَصِيْنَ ﴿١٢٨﴾ وَتَرَكْنَا عَلَيْهِ فِى الْاٰخِرِيْنَ ﴿١٢٩﴾ سَلٰمٌ
عَلٰٓى اِلْ يَاسِيْنَ ﴿١٣٠﴾ اِنَّا كَذٰلِكَ نَجْزِى الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ ﴿١٣١﴾ اِنَّهٗ
مِنْ عِبَادِنَا الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿١٣٢﴾

And surely, Ilyās (Eliah) is one of the messengers. [123] **(Remember) when he said to his people: "Do you not fear Allah? Do you invoke Ba'l, and ignore the Best of the creators,** [125] **that is, Allah who is your Lord and the Lord of your forefathers?"** [126] **Then they rejected him. Therefore, they will be arraigned -** [127] **except the chosen servants of Allah.** [128] **And We left for him (a word of praise) among the later people,** [129] **(that is,) "Salam on Ilyāsin (Ilyās).** [130] **This is how We reward those who are good in deeds.** [131] **Surely, he is from among Our believing servants.** [132]

Commentary

Sayyidnā Ilyās عليه السلام

Described in the verses cited above is the fourth event relating to Sayyidnā Ilyās عليه السلام. Before we take up the explanation of these verses, a few bits of information about Sayyidnā Ilyās عليه السلام are being given below.

Sayyidnā Ilyās عليه السلام has been mentioned in the noble Qur'ān only at two places: Firstly, in Sūrah Al-An'ām (6:85) and secondly, in these very verses of Sūrah Aṣ-Ṣaffāt (37:123) and (37:130). As for the reference in Sūrah Al-An'am, his good name appears there only as part of a list of righteous prophets, and no event finds mention there. However, at this place in the present Sūrah, an event relating to his mission and call has been described very briefly.

Since details about the personal antecedents of Sayyidnā Ilyās عليه السلام do not find mention in the noble Qur'ān, nor do these appear in authentic

aḥādīth, different sayings and variant narrations about him are found in books of Tafsīr, most of which have been taken from Isra'īlī narratives.

A small group of commentators holds that 'Ilyās' is simply another name of Sayyidnā Idrīs عليه السلام (Enoch), and there is no difference between these two persons. Some others have also said that there is no difference between Sayyidnā Ilyās عليه السلام and Sayyidnā Khaḍir عليه السلام (ad-Durr-ul-Manthūr, pp. 285, 286, v. 5). But, researchers have refuted these sayings. The Qur'ān too has mentioned Sayyidnā Idris and Sayyidnā Khaḍir عليه السلام separately in a manner that it leaves no room for declaring these two as being the same. Therefore, what Hafiz Ibn Kathīr has adjudged as correct is but that both of them are two separate messengers (al-bidāyah wa-n-nihāyah, p. 339, v. 1).

When and where did he appear?

The Qur'ān and Ḥadīth also do not tell us as to when and where he appeared. But, historical and Isra'ilite narratives almost concur that he was sent to the Banī Isra'īl after Ḥizqil عليه السلام (Ezekiel), and before Al-Yasa' عليه السلام. This was a time when the kingdom of Bani Isra'īl had split into two states. One part was called Yahudiyah (Judah) with its capital at Baytul-Maqdis (Jerusalem) while the other part was known as Isra'īl, and its capital was Samaria (present Nablus). Sayyidnā Ilyās عليه السلام was born at Jal'ād in Jordan. The name of the king who ruled the Isra'īl has been given as Ahab in the Bible and Ajib or Akhib in Arab historical and exegetic writings. His wife Isabelle worshiped an idol called Ba'l, and it was she who had put the entire Banī Isra'īl on the path of idolatry by raising a huge altar dedicated to Ba'l in the country of Isra'īl. Allah Ta'ālā commanded Sayyidnā Ilyās عليه السلام to go in that area, preach pure monotheism and dissuade Israelites from indulging in idol worship (please see Tafsīr Ibn Jarīr, p. 53, v. 23; Ibn Kathīr, p. 19, v. 4; Tafsīr Maẓharī, p. 134, v. 8 and the Bible: Kings I: 16:29-33 and 17:1).

Sayyidnā Ilyās عليه السلام: The struggle with his people

Very much like other noble prophets عليهم السلام Sayyidnā Ilyās عليه السلام too had to engage in a severe struggle with his people. Since the noble Qur'ān is no book of history, therefore, rather than describe details of this struggle, it restricts itself to saying only that which was necessary for taking a lesson. In other words, his people belied him, and no one except a few chosen servants of Allah listened to Sayyidnā Ilyās عليه السلام, therefore,

they will have to face their terrible fate in afterlife.

At this stage, some commentators have described this struggle in details. Out of the customary books of Tafsīr, the most exhaustive mention of Sayyidnā Ilyās عليه السلام appears in Tafsīr Maẓharī with reference to 'Allāmah al-Baghawī. The events mentioned there have almost all been taken from the Bible. Some parts of these events in other books of Tafsīr as well have been described with reference to Wahb Ibn Munnabih and Ka'b al-Aḥbār رضي الله عنه, being those who report Isra'īlī narratives mostly .

In sum, the common factor that emerges from all these narratives is that Sayyidnā Ilyās عليه السلام, by asking Ahab, the king of Isra'īl, and his people to shun idolatry, invited them towards pure monotheism. But, except for a few votaries of truth, no one listened to him, in fact, tried to harass him in all sorts of ways, so much so that Ahab and his wife, Isabelle planned to kill him. He took refuge in a far out cave where he stayed for a considerably long period of time. After that he prayed that the people of Isra'īl be seized with famine, so that he may show them some miracles at his hand for removing the famine, may be, they would, then, come to believe. So, they were struck with a famine.

After that, following a command of Allah Ta'ālā, Sayyidnā Ilyās عليه السلام met Ahab and told him that the famine was there because of disobedience to Allah, and if he were to abstain from it even that late, that punishment could stand removed. Then this was, he told him, the best opportunity for him to test his veracity. He said, 'you say your god Ba'l has four hundred and fifty apostles in this part of Isra'īl. Gather them together before me on a day of your choice. Let them offer their sacrifice in the name of Ba'l, and I shall offer my sacrifice in the name of Allah. The one whose offering the heavenly fire would come and burn to ashes will be the one whose faith will be true'. Everyone readily agreed to this proposal.

So, they gathered at Mount Carmel, the appointed place. The false apostles of Ba'l offered there sacrifice and remained busy with their entreaties before Ba'l from morning till afternoon. But, no answer came. After that, Sayyidnā Ilyās عليه السلام offered his sacrifice whereupon came the fire from the heavens and burnt the sacrifice offered by Sayyidnā Ilyās عليه السلام reducing it to ashes. Seeing this, many people fell prostrated in sajdah - the truth laid manifested before them. But, the false apostles of

Ba'l still remained adamant. Therefore, Sayyidnā Ilyās عليه السلام had them killed in the valley of Kishon.

After this event came heavy rains. The whole region turned verdant. But Isabelle, the wife of Ahab, was still not ready to learn her lesson. Rather than believe in the message of Sayyidnā Ilyās عليه السلام, she actually turned more hostile against him by preparing to have him killed. When Sayyidnā Ilyās عليه السلام came to know about it, he left Samaria, and went into hiding once again. After the passage of some time, he started preaching in Judah, the other country of the Bani Isrā'īl - because, the epidemic of idolatry had gradually reached there as well. Jehuram, the king out there also did not listen to him until he was destroyed following a prophecy of Sayyidnā Ilyās عليه السلام. A few years later, he returned to Isrā'īl once again, and tried to reform Ahab and his son, Ahaziah. But they continued to stick to their misdeeds until came the time when they were hit by foreign intrusions and fatal diseases. Thereafter, Allah Ta'ālā recalled His prophet back unto Him.

Is Sayyidnā Ilyās عليه السلام alive?

Also debated among historians and commentators there is the issue whether Sayyidnā Ilyās عليه السلام is alive, or has he died? In the lengthy narrative reported in Tafsīr Maẓharī with reference to 'Allamah al-Baghawi, it has also been mentioned that Sayyidnā Ilyās عليه السلام was lifted towards the heavens mounted on a horse of fire, and that he is alive there like Sayyidnā 'Īsā عليه السلام (Maẓharī, p. 141, v. 8). 'Allāmah as-Suyūṭī has also reported several narratives from Ibn 'Asakir, Hakim and others which indicate that he is alive. It has been reported from Ka'b al-Ahbar that four prophets are still alive: two on the earth - Sayyidnā Khaḍir and Sayyidnā Ilyās عليه السلام; and two in the heavens - Sayyidnā 'Isa and Sayyidnā Idris (ad-durr-ul-manthūr, p. 285, 286, v. 5). Indeed, some have gone to the extent of saying that Sayyidnā Khiḍr and Sayyidnā Ilyās get together in Baytul-Maqdis during the month of Ramaḍān and keep fasts. (Tafsīr Qurṭubī, p. 116, v. 15)

But, authentic scholars like Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Kathīr have not declared these narratives to be sound. About narratives of this nature, he writes:

وهو من الاسرائيليات التى لا تصدّق ولا تكذب بل الظاهر أن صحّتها بعيدة (البداية والنهاية، ص ٣٣٨ ج ١)

> This is one of those Isra'īlī (Judaic) narratives that are neither confirmed nor falsified. Instead, what is obvious is that (the proposition of) its soundness is remote.

In addition to that, he says:

> "Ibn 'Asākir has reported several narratives of people who have met Sayyidnā Ilyās عليه السلام. But, none of these is satisfactory - either for the reason that the chain of authority cited therein is weak, or for the reason that people to whom these events have been attributed are unknown" - al-bidayah wa-n-nihayah, p. 339, v. 1)

It is fairly evident that this idea of Sayyidnā Ilyās عليه السلام having been lifted towards the heavens has been taken invariably from the Isra'īli narratives. The Bible says:

> "And as they still went on and talked, behold, a chariot of fire and horses of fire separated the two of them. And Elijah (Ilyas) went up by a whirlwind into heaven."(2 Kings 2:11)

For this reason, came the belief among Jews that Sayyidnā Ilyās عليه السلام will return to the earth once once again. Hence when Sayyidnā Yaḥyā عليه السلام was sent as a prophet, they doubted if he was Sayyidnā Ilyās عليه السلام. It appears in the Bible:

> "And they asked him, 'What then? Are you Elijah?' He said, 'I am not." (Gospel of John 1:21)

It seems that scholars like Ka'b al-Aḥbār and Wahb Ibn Munabbih who were well versed in the religious background of the People of the Book would have described these very narratives before Muslims as a result of which this idea of Sayyidnā Ilyās عليه السلام being alive found currency among some Muslims. Otherwise, there is nothing in the Qur'ān, or the Ḥadīth, that provides any proof of his being alive or having been raised up unto the heavens. What we have here is only one narrative found in the Mustadrak of al-Ḥākim where it has been said that, on his way to Tabūk, the Holy Prophet ﷺ met Sayyidnā Ilyās عليه السلام. But, this report is, as held by Ḥadīth experts, 'mawdu' or fabricated or technically apocryphal. Ḥāfiẓ adh-Dhahabi says:

بل هو موضوع قبّح الله من وضعه وما كنت احسب ولا أُجوّز انّ الجهل يبلغ
بالحكام الى ان يصحّح هذا (درمنثور، ص ٢٨٦ ج٥)

"In fact, this is fabricated. Cursed be whoever fabricated it. I had never imagined that the inadvertence of al-Ḥākim could overtake him to the extent that he would admit this thing as sound - ad-Durr-ul-Manthur, p. 286, v. 5.

In short, it is not proved from any authentic Islamic report that Sayyidnā Ilyās عليه السلام is alive. Hence, in this matter, the safest (and the sanest) course is to observe silence. Particularly, in the case of Isra'īlī (Judaic) narratives, one should follow the teaching of the Holy Prophet ﷺ: 'neither confirm, nor falsify these.' The reason is that the Qur'ān has a purpose - that is, it should be understood, provide lessons and give good counsel. This purpose can be achieved fully even without having to do something like this. And Allah is Pure and High - He knows best. Now, we can turn to an explanation of the verses.

The word: بعل (*ba'l*) in verse 125: اَتَدْعُوْنَ بَعْلًا (Do you invoke Ba'l...) literally means husband, master etc. But, it was the name of a particular idol that the people of Sayyidnā Ilyās عليه السلام had taken to as the object of their worship. The history of the worship of *ba'l* (Baal) goes way back in time. It was worshipped in the country of Syria during the time of Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام and it used to be the most popular idol-god they had. Ba'labakk, (Baalbek or ancient Heliopolis in present Lebanon), the once famous city of Syria was also named after it. Some people think that Hubal, the well-known idol of the pre-Islam people of Ḥijāz, was this very *ba'l* (Qaṣaṣ-ul-Qur'ān, p. 28, v. 2).

In the next sentence of the same verse, it was said: وَتَذَرُوْنَ اَحْسَنَ الْخَالِقِيْنَ (Do you invoke Ba'l, and ignore the Best of the creators,). This refers to Allah Ta'ālā while the expression: اَحْسَنَ الْخَالِقِيْنَ (*aḥsanul-khāliqīn*: the best of the creators) never means that there could be, God forbid, some other creator as well. On the contrary, the drive and the sense of the statement is that He is the one most exalted of all those false objects of worship they had taken to as being some sort of a creator (Qurṭubī). Some commentators have said that the word: خَالِق (*khāliq*: creator, maker) has been used here in the sense of صَانِع (*sāni'* : maker), that is, 'He is far ahead and far better than all other makers.' What do all other makers really do? They do no more than take different components, put them together and here is something they have made. Bringing something out from nothingness into existence is what they do not have under their power and control -

and Allah Ta'ālā does. He has that inherent power to make what is not become what is. (Bayān-ul-Qur'ān)

Ascribing the attribute of creation to anyone other than Allah is not permissible

At this point, it should be borne in mind that خَلَق (*khalq*) means to create, that is, to bring something from the state of non-being into the state of being solely on the strength of the creator's inherent power. Therefore, this attribute is particular to Allah Ta'ālā. Ascribing it to someone else is not permissible. Hence, the custom prevailing in our time that the articles of writers, compositions of poets and paintings of painters are readily referred to as their 'creations' is simply not permissible. How can people who write become 'creators' of those articles? It is not correct. Allah is the *khāliq*, the creator. This is Him alone - no one else can be. Therefore, their good writings should be called articles or something else that alludes to their effort, imagination, research work or whatever applies as appropriate - but, not 'creation.'

In verse 127, it was said: فَكَذَّبُوهُ فَإِنَّهُمْ لَمُحْضَرُونَ : "Then they rejected him. Therefore, they will be arraigned." It means that they will have to taste the consequence of having belied the true messengers of Allah. It could also be referring to the punishment of the Hereafter as well as their sad end within this world. That the rulers of both the countries of Isra'īl and Judah had to face destruction as a result of their having rejected Sayyidnā Ilyās عليه السلام has been mentioned earlier. The detailed account of this destruction is present in Tafsīr Maẓharī and in the Bible: Kings I, Chapter 22; Kings II; Chapter 1 and Chronicles II; Chapter 21.

In verse 128, it was said: إِلَّا عِبَادَ اللّٰهِ الْمُخْلَصِينَ (except the chosen servants of Allah). Here, the word used is: مُخْلَصِينَ (*mukhlāsīn*) (pronounced with a fathah on the letter lam) which means chosen, elected, people Divinely identified as special. As such, these will be people whom Allah has elected to become recipients of the honor of having obeyed Him perfectly and made themselves deserving of the best returns and rewards from Him. Hence, it would be more appropriate to translate it in the sense of 'the chosen' rather than 'sincere.'

The word: إلياسين (*il yā sīn*) used in: سَلَامٌ عَلَىٰ إِلْ يَاسِينَ (Salam on il ya sin - 130) is also the very name of Sayyidnā Ilyās عليه السلام. The people of Arabia

are used to adding the letters '*yā*' and '*nūn*' with non-Arab names fairly often - for example, سِينَا (sinā: Sinai) could take the form of سِينِين (*sinin*). Similarly, here too, two letters have been added.

Verses 133 - 138

وَإِنَّ لُوطًا لَّمِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ ﴿١٣٣﴾ إِذْ نَجَّيْنَٰهُ وَأَهْلَهُۥٓ أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿١٣٤﴾
إِلَّا عَجُوزًا فِى الْغَٰبِرِينَ ﴿١٣٥﴾ ثُمَّ دَمَّرْنَا الْءَاخَرِينَ ﴿١٣٦﴾ وَإِنَّكُمْ
لَتَمُرُّونَ عَلَيْهِم مُّصْبِحِينَ ﴿١٣٧﴾ وَبِالَّيْلِ ۗ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿١٣٨﴾

And surely, Lūṭ is one of the messengers. [133] **(Remember) when We saved him and his family, all of them,** [134] **except an old woman among those remaining behind.** [135] **After that, We destroyed others** [136] **and you do pass over them at daybreak** [137] **and by nightfall. Would you still not understand?** [138]

Commentary

Mentioned in these verses is the fifth event that relates to Sayyidnā Lūṭ عليه السلام. This event has appeared at several places earlier, therefore, no more details are needed. Here, the people of Makkah have been particularly admonished that they passed by the site of Sadum (Sodom) day and night while traveling with theirs trade caravans to the country of Syria, and Sadum was a place where this grave event came to pass, an event full of vital lessons, yet they failed to learn any. The time of morning and evening was particularly mentioned for the reason that the people of Arabia generally used to pass through here during these very hours. Says Qadi Abu-s-Sa'ud: 'Perhaps, this site of Sodom was located at a stage on this route that those who departed from here did so in the hours of the morning and those who arrived here did so at the time of the evening' (Tafsīr abi-s- Sa'ūd).

Verses 139 -148

وَإِنَّ يُونُسَ لَمِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ ﴿١٣٩﴾ إِذْ أَبَقَ إِلَى الْفُلْكِ الْمَشْحُونِ
﴿١٤٠﴾ فَسَاهَمَ فَكَانَ مِنَ الْمُدْحَضِينَ ﴿١٤١﴾ فَالْتَقَمَهُ الْحُوتُ

وَهُوَ مُلِيْمٌ ﴿١٤٢﴾ فَلَوْلَآ اَنَّهٗ كَانَ مِنَ الْمُسَبِّحِيْنَ ﴿١٤٣﴾ لَلَبِثَ فِيْ
بَطْنِهٖٓ اِلٰى يَوْمِ يُبْعَثُوْنَ ﴿١٤٤﴾ فَنَبَذْنٰهُ بِالْعَرَآءِ وَهُوَ سَقِيْمٌ ﴿١٤٥﴾
وَاَنْۢبَتْنَا عَلَيْهِ شَجَرَةً مِّنْ يَّقْطِيْنٍ ﴿١٤٦﴾ وَاَرْسَلْنٰهُ اِلٰى مِائَةِ اَلْفٍ اَوْ
يَزِيْدُوْنَ ﴿١٤٧﴾ فَاٰمَنُوْا فَمَتَّعْنٰهُمْ اِلٰى حِيْنٍ ﴿١٤٨﴾

And surely, Yūnus (Jonah) is from among the messengers. [139] **(Remember) when he ran away towards the boat already loaded.** [140] **Then he participated in drawing lots (to offload one of the passengers) and was the one who was defeated.** [141] **Then the fish swallowed him while he was reproaching his own self.** [142] **Had he not been of those who proclaim Allah's purity,** [143] **he would have definitely lived in its belly till the day when the dead will be raised.** [144] **Then We cast him ashore in the open while he was ill.** [145] **and We caused a tree of ourds to grow over him.** [146] **And We had sent him (as messenger) to one hundred thousand, or more.** [147] **So, they believed, then, We let them enjoy for a time.** [148]

Commentary

The last event described in this Sūrah is that of Sayyidnā Yūnus عليه السلام. This event, along with its details, has appeared towards the later part of Sūrah Yūnus (please see Ma'āriful-Qur'ān, English, Volume IV, pages 573-588). However, a few necessary comments about these particular verses are being given below.

In the opening verse (139), it was said: وَاِنَّ يُوْنُسَ لَمِنَ الْمُرْسَلِيْنَ (And surely, Yūnus is from among the messengers). Was Sayyidnā Yūnus عليه السلام ordained as a messenger much earlier than his encounter with the fish, or did it come to pass after that? This issue has been a subject of debate among some commentators and historians. Some of them think that he was made a messenger after this event. But, in view of the apparent order and style of the noble Qur'ān, and from most Ḥadīth narrations, it is more likely that he was invested with the mission of prophethood earlier. The event of the fish came later.

The word: اَبَقَ (*abaqa*) in the next verse (140): اِذْ اَبَقَ اِلَى الْفُلْكِ الْمَشْحُوْنِ (when he ran towards the boat already loaded) has been derived from: اِبَاقٌ

(ibaq) which means 'escaping of a slave from his master'. Allah Ta'ālā has used this word for Sayyidnā Yūnus عليه السلام for the reason that he had started off without waiting for the revelation from his Lord. The noble prophets are the close ones among the servants of Allah. The slightest slip from them causes the swiftest grip. Hence comes this strong expression (*'abaqa'*: 'he ran').

Verse 141 opens with the statement: فَسَاهَمَ (*fasahama*: Then he participated in drawing lots...). These lots were drawn at a time when the boat was caught by a storm while in the middle of the waters. It was apprehended that its excessive weight might cause it to drown. It was decided that one person from the boat should be cast off into the waters. Lots were drawn to determine who would it be.

The Injunction of drawing lots

At this point, it should be borne in mind that the drawing of lots is a method of selecting somebody to do something through which one can neither prove someone's right, nor indict someone as a criminal. For example, no one can be proved to be a thief by drawing lots. Similarly, should two persons differ about the ownership of some property, it cannot be decided by drawing lots as to who owns it. However drawing of lots is permissible - rather, better - on an occasion where a person is totally entitled, Shari'ah-wise, to opt for any course out of the few permissible courses of action available. Now, it is up to him. He can, rather than go by his will and choice and select a course of action, arrive at a decisive line of action by drawing lots. For example, someone who has more than one wife and is going on a journey, then, he has the right to take the wife he elects to take with him. Now, rather than do this following his will and choice, if he were to draw lots, it would be better - so that no one is disheartened. The Holy Prophet ﷺ used to do that.

The purpose behind the drawing of lots in this event relating to Sayyidnā Yūnus عليه السلام was not to label anyone as some culprit. In fact, to save a whole boat-full of passengers, anyone could have been cast away into the waters. So, the name of the person to be cast was determined by drawing lots.

Immediately next in the verse, it was said: فَكَانَ مِنَ الْمُدْحَضِينَ : " and was the one who was defeated." The word: إِدْحَاضٌ (*idḥāḍ*) literally means to

defeat someone or to make him fail, lose. The sense is that it was his name that came up in the draw - and he threw himself into the waters. No one should raise the objection that it was some sort of a suicide plunge, for it is possible that the shore was near and he intended to swim ashore.

In verse 143, it was said: فَلَوْ لَآ اَنَّهٗ كَانَ مِنَ الْمُسَبِّحِيْنَ (Had he not been of those who proclaim Allah's purity,....). From this verse, it is wrong to assume that had Sayyidnā Yūnus عليه السلام not been making tasbih, that fish would have been living right through the last day of Qiyāmah. Instead, the sense is that the very belly of this fish would have been made the grave of Sayyidnā Yūnus عليه السلام.

Distress is removed by *tasbih* (remembrance) and *istighfar* (repentance)

From this verse we also learn that *tasbīḥ* (لَآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّآ اَنْتَ سُبْحٰنَكَ اِنِّیْ كُنْتُ مِنَ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ : the act of proclaiming the purity of Allah) and istighfar (... : the act of seeking forgiveness from Him) have a proven efficacy of their own. It has already appeared in Sūrah Al-Anbiyā' [21] that Sayyidnā Yūnus عليه السلام, while in the belly of the fish, used to recite the following sentence of tasbīḥ:

لَآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّآ اَنْتَ سُبْحٰنَكَ اِنِّیْ كُنْتُ مِنَ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ

There is no god but You - Pure are You - Indeed I was among the wrongdoers - Al-Anbiyā', 21:87.

By the Barakah of this very Tasbīḥ, Allah Ta'ālā had him delivered from this trial, and he came out safe and sound from the belly of the fish. Therefore, it has been continuously reported from pious elders that they recite this tasbih one hundred and twenty-five thousand times at the time they faced any individual or collective distress and, by virtue of its barakah, Allah Ta'ālā would have this distress removed from them.

According to a narration from Sayyidnā Sa'd Ibn Abī Waqqāṣ رضي الله عنه appearing in Abū Dāwūd, the Holy Prophet ﷺ said: "Any Muslim who recites the prayer Sayyidnā Yūnus عليه السلام had made while in the belly of the fish, that is: لَآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّآ اَنْتَ سُبْحٰنَكَ اِنِّیْ كُنْتُ مِنَ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ (*lā ilāha illā anta - subḥānaka - inni kuntu minaẓ-ẓālimīn*: There is no god but You - Pure are You - Indeed I was among the wrongdoers - 21:87) for any (permissible) objective, his du'a or prayer will be answered." (Tafsīr Qurṭubī)

In verse 145, it was said: فَنَبَذْنٰهُ بِالْعَرَآءِ وَهُوَ سَقِيْمٌ (Then We cast him ashore in the open while he was ill.) The word: العراء (*al-'ara'*) used in the text means an open land with no trees. Some narrations tell us that, at that time, Sayyidnā Yūnus عليه السلام had become very weak because of having remained confined within the belly of the fish and that he had no hair left on his body.

Said next, it was: وَاَنْۢبَتْنَا عَلَيْهِ شَجَرَةً مِّنْ يَّقْطِيْنٍ (and We caused a tree of gourd to grow over him. - 146). The word: يَقْطِيْنٌ (*yaqṭīn*) signifies every such tree that has no trunk. It appears in Ḥadīth narrations that it was a gourd creeper. The purpose of having a tree grow there was to make the provision of shade for Sayyidnā Yūnus عليه السلام. The word: شَجَرَةً (*shajarah*: tree) at this place serves as an indicator of two possibilities: Either Allah had made this very plant of gourd grow with a trunk by way of a miracle, or it was some other tree on which the creeping plant of gourd was made to wind its way up, so that it could provide a thick shade, otherwise, having enough shade from a winding plant alone would have been difficult.

It was said in verse 147: وَاَرْسَلْنٰهُ اِلٰى مِائَةِ اَلْفٍ اَوْ يَزِيْدُوْنَ (And We had sent him [as messenger] to one hundred thousand, or more). A difficulty may arise here. Is it not that Allah Ta'ālā is Knowing and Aware? Why would He have to express the doubt that the number of those people was 'one hundred thousand, or more?' It can be answered by saying that this statement has been made in congruity with the view of common people, that is, if an average person would have seen them, he would have said that their number is one hundred thousand or somewhat more than that (Maẓharī). Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānavi has said that nothing is being doubted here in the text itself. They could be called one hundred thousand, and also more than that - for example, if one eliminates the fraction, their number was one hundred thousand, and if the fraction were also taken into account, it would be more than one hundred thousand. (Bayān-ul-Qur'ān)

The expression: اِلٰى حِيْنٍ (*ilā ḥīn*: for a time) in: فَاٰمَنُوْا فَمَتَّعْنٰهُمْ اِلٰى حِيْنٍ ([147] So, they believed, then, We let them enjoy for a time.- 148) means that as long as they did not revert to their kufr and shirk, no punishment visited them.

Exposing the fraud of the Qadyani imposter

It has already been demonstrated in the Tafsīr of Sūrah Yūnus (Ma'āriful-Qur'ān, English, Volume IV), and it is clear from this verse too, that the reason why the punishment due to visit the people of Sayyidnā Yūnus عليه السلام was averted was that his people had started believing on time - before it actually materialized. This puts the fraudulent claim of Mirzā Ghulām Aḥmad Qādiāni (the false pretender to prophethood from Qadian located in Punjāb, now called Haryana in India) when he had challenged his adversaries that, should they continue to oppose him, it stood decreed that Divine punishment would descend upon them by such and such time. But, quite conversely, the adversaries became stronger and more vocal, yet the punishment never came. At that time, in order to salvage himself out from the disgrace of failure, the Qadiani imposter started saying that since his adversaries were really scared in their hearts, therefore, this punishment stood removed from them - as it had stood removed from the people of Sayyidnā Yūnus عليه السلام. But, this verse of the noble Qur'ān declares this interpretation to be false and rejected. The reason is that the people of Sayyidnā Yūnus عليه السلام had stayed safe from the punishment because of their *'imān*, belief and faith. Contrary to this was the case of the adversaries of Mirzā Ghulām Aḥmad of Qādian - not only that they did not believe in him, in fact, their struggle against him gained more strength and momentum.

Verses 149 - 166

فَاسْتَفْتِهِمْ اَلِرَبِّكَ الْبَنَاتُ وَلَهُمُ الْبَنُوْنَ ﴿١٤٩﴾ اَمْ خَلَقْنَا الْمَلٰٓئِكَةَ
اِنَاثًا وَّهُمْ شٰهِدُوْنَ ﴿١٥٠﴾ اَلَآ اِنَّهُمْ مِّنْ اِفْكِهِمْ لَيَقُوْلُوْنَ ﴿١٥١﴾ وَلَدَ
اللّٰهُ وَاِنَّهُمْ لَكٰذِبُوْنَ ﴿١٥٢﴾ اَصْطَفَى الْبَنَاتِ عَلَى الْبَنِيْنَ ﴿١٥٣﴾
مَالَكُمْ كَيْفَ تَحْكُمُوْنَ ﴿١٥٤﴾ اَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُوْنَ ﴿١٥٥﴾ اَمْ لَكُمْ
سُلْطٰنٌ مُّبِيْنٌ ﴿١٥٦﴾ فَاْتُوْا بِكِتٰبِكُمْ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ صٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿١٥٧﴾
وَجَعَلُوْا بَيْنَهٗ وَبَيْنَ الْجِنَّةِ نَسَبًا وَلَقَدْ عَلِمَتِ الْجِنَّةُ اِنَّهُمْ
لَمُحْضَرُوْنَ ﴿١٥٨﴾ سُبْحٰنَ اللّٰهِ عَمَّا يَصِفُوْنَ ﴿١٥٩﴾ اِلَّا عِبَادَ اللّٰهِ

الْمُخْلَصِيْنَ ﴿١٦٠﴾ فَإِنَّكُمْ وَمَا تَعْبُدُوْنَ ﴿١٦١﴾ مَآ اَنْتُمْ عَلَيْهِ بِفٰتِنِيْنَ
﴿١٦٢﴾ اِلَّا مَنْ هُوَ صَالِ الْجَحِيْمِ ﴿١٦٣﴾ وَمَا مِنَّآ اِلَّا لَهٗ مَقَامٌ مَّعْلُوْمٌ
﴿١٦٤﴾ وَّاِنَّا لَنَحْنُ الصَّآفُّوْنَ ﴿١٦٥﴾ وَاِنَّا لَنَحْنُ الْمُسَبِّحُوْنَ ﴿١٦٦﴾

So ask them, "Does your Lord have daughters while they have sons?" [149] **Or, did We create the angels as females while they were witnessing?** [150] **Beware! They are the ones who, by way of a lie of theirs, (have the audacity to) say,** [151] **"Allah has children" - and they are absolute liars.** [152] **Is it that Allah has chosen daughters (for Himself) instead of sons?** [153] **What is the matter with you? How (arbitrarily) do you judge?** [154] **Then, is it that you do not think about it?** [155] **Or, is it that there is some open authority with you?** [156] **Then bring your book, if you are truthful.** [157] **And they have made up between Him and the Jinns some kinship, while the Jinns already know that they are bound to appear (before Him).** [158] **Pure is Allah from what they describe -** [159] **except the chosen servants of Allah.** [160] **So, you and those whom you worship -** [161] **none of you can make one turn away from Him -** [162] **except the one who is to burn in Jahannam.** [163] **And (the angels say,) "There is no one among us who does not have a known station,** [164] **and We, surely We, are those who stand in rows** [165] **and We, surely We, are those who proclaim Allah's purity."** [166]

Commentary

Events relating to the noble prophets described earlier provided some good counsel and some lessons to learn. Now, once again, the text turns to the essential subject of the affirmation of pure monotheism (*tauḥīd*) and the refutation of ascribing partners to the pristine divinity of Allah (*shirk*). Then, described at this particular place is the *shirk* of a particular kind. The disbelievers of Arabia believed that angels were the daughters of Allah Ta'ālā, and the daughters of the chieftains of Jinns were the mothers of angels. According to 'Allāmah Wāḥidī, this belief was not restricted to the Quraish alone. It also prevailed among the tribes of Juhainah, Banū Salamah, Banū Khuza'ah and Banū Maliḥ (Tafsīr Kabīr, p. 112, v. 7)

In verses beginning with: فَاسْتَفْتِهِمْ (So ask them... -149) and ending at:

إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صٰدِقِيْنَ (if you are truthful - 157), arguments have been given in support of the refutation of this belief of the disbelievers of Arabia. In gist, it has been said here: To begin with, this belief of yours is totally wrong in terms of your own recognized practice and customs, since you yourself regard daughters to be a source of shame. Now, what is a source of shame for you personally, how could this thing be proved to be good for Allah Ta'ālā? Then, you have declared angels to be daughters of Allah. What proof do you have for saying so? There could be three kinds of arguments to prove a claim: (1) Observation (2) Report, that is, the saying of an entity or person whose veracity is established and (3) Reason. As far as observation is concerned, it is obvious that you have just not seen Allah Ta'ālā creating angels that could have given you the knowledge of the gender of angels. Therefore, you have no proof from observation with you. When it was said: اَمْ خَلَقْنَا الْمَلٰٓئِكَةَ اِنَاثًا وَّهُمْ شٰهِدُوْنَ (Or, did We create the angels as females while they were witnessing? - 150), this is what it means. As for a reported proof, you do not have that too because one only goes by the word of people who are trustworthy and whose veracity is well established. Quite contrary to this, there are those who hold this kind of belief but they are liars. Nothing they say can be a binding argument. When it was said: ... اَلَآ اِنَّهُمْ مِّنْ اِفْكِهِمْ لَيَقُوْلُوْنَ (Beware! They are the ones who, by way of a lie of theirs, [have the audacity to] say, "Allah has children" - and they are absolute liars - 151,152), this is what it means. As for the rational argument, even that does not go in your favor because, in your view, daughters have a lower status as compared to that of the sons. Now, think of the great Being of Allah that holds the superior most status in the entire universe - how can this superior most Being like to have something of a lower status? When it was said: اَصْطَفَى الْبَنَاتِ عَلَى الْبَنِيْنَ (Is it that Allah has chosen daughters (for Himself) instead of sons? - 153), this is what it means. Now, this leaves only one likelihood unexplored - may be, you have been blessed with some scripture from the heavens through the medium of revelation (*waḥy*) in which you have been asked to believe as you do. So, if this be the case, come out and show us the proof - where is that revelation and where is that Book? When it was said: اَمْ لَكُمْ سُلْطٰنٌ مُّبِيْنٌ، فَاْتُوْا بِكِتٰبِكُمْ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ صٰدِقِيْنَ (Or, is it that there is some open authority with you? Then bring your book if you are truthful - 156, 157) this is what it means.

An *ilzāmi* (الزامی) answer (based on adversary's assumption) is more appropriate for the obstinate

From these verses we learn that it is more appropriate to tackle people bent on obstinacy with an *ilzāmi* response. An *ilzāmi* response means that their claim should be refuted through the analogy of some other view of things they themselves have. In doing so, it is never necessary to concede that we too subscribe to this other view, in fact, there could be occasion when that other view is also incorrect. But, it is only to drive some sense into the obstinate adversary that it is put to use functionally. Here, to refute their belief, Allah Ta'ālā has used their own view that the existence of daughters is a cause of disgrace. It is obvious that it does not mean that it is so with Allah Ta'ālā as well, nor does it mean that, had they called angels 'sons of God' rather than 'daughters of God,' it would have been correct. In fact, this is an *ilzāmi* response, and its aim is to refute their belief by citing their own claims. Otherwise, the real response to beliefs of this nature is no other but that which finds mention in the noble Qur'ān itself - that Allah Ta'ālā is independent and need-free and neither does He need any children, nor does it befit His Most Exalted State of Being.

In verse 158, it was said: وَجَعَلُوا بَيْنَهُ وَبَيْنَ الْجِنَّةِ نَسَبًا (And they have made up between Him and the Jinns some kinship). There are two explanations of this sentence. According to the first Tafsīr, this is a description of the false belief held by the Mushriks of Arabia that the daughters of the chieftains of the Jinns are mothers of the angels. As if, God forbid, the daughters of the chieftains of the Jinns have marital relations with Allah Ta'ālā and, as a result of this bond, angels have come to exist. Hence, it appears in an exegetical narration when the Mushriks of Arabia declared angels to be the daughters of Allah, Sayyidnā Abū Bakr ﷺ asked, "Who is their mother?" They said, "Daughters of the Jinns" (Tafsīr ibn Kathīr, p. 23, v. 4). But, this Tafsīr leaves an unresolved difficulty behind: The verse is talking about the attribution of kinship between Allah Ta'ālā and the Jinns, while the marital relationship of a husband and wife is not based on kinship.

For this reason, another Tafsīr that has been reported from Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās, Hasan al-Basri and Dahhak seems to be weightier. According to this Tafsīr, some of the people of Arabia also believed that, God forbid,

Iblis was a brother to Allah Ta'ālā who was the creator of good while he was the creator of evil. Here, this very false belief has been refuted (please see Tafsīr ibn Kathīr, Tafsīr al-Qurṭubī and Tafsīr Kabīr).

Immediately next within verse 158 it was said: وَلَقَدْ عَلِمَتِ الْجِنَّةُ إِنَّهُمْ لَمُحْضَرُوْنَ: (158)', while the Jinns already know that they are bound to appear (before Him).' Here, 'they' could be referring to the kinds of Mushriks who took Jinns and satans as equals of God, meaning thereby that the Jinns know that these Mushriks will appear before Allah Ta'ālā for being punished, and could also refer to the Jinns themselves. In this situation, the sense of the verse would come to be that 'the satans and Jinns you have taken to be associated with Allah in one or the other form already know very well that they are going to face a terrible fate in the Hereafter. For example, Iblis is perfectly aware of his evil end. Now, someone who himself believes that he has to taste his punishment could hardly be the equal of God and taking him to be so would certainly be a gross lack of good sense.

Verses 167 - 179

وَإِنْ كَانُوْا لَيَقُوْلُوْنَ ﴿١٦٧﴾ لَوْ أَنَّ عِنْدَنَا ذِكْرًا مِّنَ الْأَوَّلِيْنَ ﴿١٦٨﴾
لَكُنَّا عِبَادَ اللّٰهِ الْمُخْلَصِيْنَ ﴿١٦٩﴾ فَكَفَرُوْا بِهٖ فَسَوْفَ يَعْلَمُوْنَ
﴿١٧٠﴾ وَلَقَدْ سَبَقَتْ كَلِمَتُنَا لِعِبَادِنَا الْمُرْسَلِيْنَ ﴿١٧١﴾ إِنَّهُمْ لَهُمُ
الْمَنْصُوْرُوْنَ ﴿١٧٢﴾ وَإِنَّ جُنْدَنَا لَهُمُ الْغٰلِبُوْنَ ﴿١٧٣﴾ فَتَوَلَّ عَنْهُمْ
حَتّٰى حِيْنٍ ﴿١٧٤﴾ وَّأَبْصِرْهُمْ فَسَوْفَ يُبْصِرُوْنَ ﴿١٧٥﴾ أَفَبِعَذَابِنَا
يَسْتَعْجِلُوْنَ ﴿١٧٦﴾ فَإِذَا نَزَلَ بِسَاحَتِهِمْ فَسَآءَ صَبَاحُ الْمُنْذَرِيْنَ
﴿١٧٧﴾ وَتَوَلَّ عَنْهُمْ حَتّٰى حِيْنٍ ﴿١٧٨﴾ وَّأَبْصِرْ فَسَوْفَ يُبْصِرُوْنَ
﴿١٧٩﴾

And they used to say, [167] "Had there been a scripture like that of the former ones with us, [168] certainly we would have been the chosen servants of Allah." [169] Then they disbelieved in it. So, very soon, they will come to know. [170] And Our Word has already gone

ahead in favor of Our servants - the messengers - [171] **they are the ones who will have Allah's support,** [172] **and verily it will be Our army (of chosen servants) that prevails.** [173] **So, withdraw your attention from them for a time.** [174] **But, see them for they shall soon see.** [175] **Are they asking for Our punishment to come sooner?** [176] **So, when it descends in their courtyard, then, evil will be the dawn of those warned.** [177] **So, withdraw your attention from them for a time.** [178] **And watch them, for they shall soon see.** [179]

Commentary

After having provided proofs of the basic beliefs of Islam, these verses now mention the obstinacy of the disbelievers. It has been said that, before the blessed appearance of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, these people used to crave for the coming of some prophet from Allah, so that they could follow him. But, when he did come, they started confronting him with a posture of obstinacy and hostility. After that, the Holy Prophet ﷺ has been comforted that he should not worry about the pain these people cause to him. The time was coming very soon when he will prevail, and his oppressors will be defeated and punished. That this will unfold comprehensively in the Hereafter is already settled, but in the mortal world too, Allah Ta'ālā showed the spectacle that, in every Jihad from the battle of Badr up to the conquest of Makkah, His blessed rasul came out victorious and his adversaries, disgraced.

The sense of 'the victory of the people of Allah'

In verses 171-173, it was said: وَلَقَدْ سَبَقَتْ كَلِمَتُنَا (الیٰ قولہٖ تعالیٰ) وَاِنَّ جُنْدَنَا لَهُمُ الْغٰلِبُوْنَ (And Our Word has already gone ahead in favor of Our servants - the messengers - they are the ones who will have Allah's support, and verily it will be Our army that prevails). The sense of these verses is that it stands predetermined with Allah that His chosen servants, that is, the prophets would be the ones to prevail. This may raise a difficulty, for in the mortal world, some prophets did not. For an answer to this, it could be said that the majority of prophets consists of the noble souls whose people belied them and met their punishment while they were kept safe from it. There are only a few among the blessed prophets who, though, could not prevail outwardly and physically right up to the end of their tenure in this world, but they always enjoyed ascendancy in the field of logic and argument, and the ultimate intellectual victory remained always theirs.

However, the physical traces of this ascendancy were - due to some consideration of wisdom, such as a trial, or its likes - deferred until the Hereafter. Hence, as said by sage Thanavi, it is like the case of a highway robber, who starts harassing a high appointee of the state while on his journey. But, this appointee would never, by virtue of his God-given intellectual sobriety, stoop to the low-down robber, until he reaches the capital of his state where the robber will be seized and punished. Therefore, simply due to this temporary ascendancy, neither can we call that robber an authority, nor that authority a subject. In fact, given the true state of affairs, that robber - despite this temporary ascendancy - is still a subject, while that man of authority - despite his temporary lack of ascendancy - is still the authority he had been all along. Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ has expressed this more briefly and lucidly by saying: اِنْ لَّمْ يُنْصَرُوْا فِى الدُّنْيَا يُنْصَرُوْا فِى الْاٰخِرَةِ (Those who are not helped to ascend in the present world are helped to ascend in the Hereafter) - Bayān-ul- Qur'ān, the Tafsīr of Sūrah al-Ma'idah (5).

But, it should always be borne in mind that no group of people achieves this supremacy or ascendancy, whether in the present world or in the Hereafter, simply by having particular racial traits, or by belonging to a religion only in name. In fact, this actually happens only when every human being makes himself a member of 'the army of Allah.' It necessarily implies that he or she should be committed to the obedience of Allah in every department of life as the objective of his or her life. Here, the word: "جُنْدَنَا" (Our army) is telling us very clearly that the person who embraces Islam will have to enter into a solemn pledge to devote his or her entire life in waging a struggle against the forces of self and Satan - and his or her supremacy, whether material or moral, whether in this world or in the Hereafter, depends on this condition.

In verse 177, it was said: فَاِذَا نَزَلَ بِسَاحَتِهِمْ فَسَآءَ صَبَاحُ الْمُنْذَرِيْنَ (So, when it descends in their courtyard, then, evil with be the dawn of the warned). The word: سَاحَة (*saḥah*) appearing in this verse literally means a courtyard, and the expression: نَزَلَ بِسَاحَتِهٖ (*nazala bisaḥatihi:* descended in his courtyard) is an Arabic idiom that denotes the appearance of a calamity face to face, while the time of morning has been specified, as an attack would usually come at that hour among the people of Arabia. This also used to be the practice with the Holy Prophet ﷺ that, should he

reach the territorial jurisdiction of some enemy at the time of night, he used to postpone his attack until the morning (Maẓharī) According to Ḥadīth narrations, when the Holy Prophet ﷺ attacked the fort of Khaibar during the morning hours, he said: الله اكبر، خربت خيبر، انّا اذا نزلنا بساحة قوم فساء صباح المنذرين (Allāhu Akbar, Khaibar is destroyed. Verily, when we descend on the courtyard of a people, the morning of those who had been already warned is too bad).

Verses 180 - 182

سُبْحٰنَ رَبِّكَ رَبِّ الْعِزَّةِ عَمَّا يَصِفُوْنَ ﴿١٨٠﴾ وَسَلٰمٌ عَلَى الْمُرْسَلِيْنَ ﴿١٨١﴾ وَالْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿١٨٢﴾

Pure is your Lord, the Lord of all might and honor, from what they describe [180] **and salam be on the messengers** [181] **and praised is Allah, Lord of all the worlds.** [182]

Commentary

Sūrah Aṣ-Ṣaffāt has been concluded on these verses, and the truth of the matter is that it would take volumes to explain this beautiful finale. In sum, Allah Ta'ālā has compressed all subjects of this Sūrah in these three verses. The Sūrah began with a description of tauhid, the theme of the Oneness of Allah, the essence of which was that Allah Ta'ālā is free from everything the Mushriks attribute to Him. Accordingly, the first verse serves as an indicator of this very detailed subject. After that, described in the Sūrah there were events relating to the noble prophets. Accordingly, a hint towards these has been made in the second verse. After that, it was very openly and explicitly that the beliefs, doubts and objections of disbelievers were refuted, both in terms of report and reason and, along with that, it was also declared that supremacy will ultimately be the lot of the people of truth - and whoever listens to these statements with good sense and insight is bound to end up praising Allah Ta'ālā. Accordingly, it is on this note of praise for Allah that the Sūrah has been concluded.

In addition to that, in these verses, the basic beliefs of Islam - *tauhid* (Oneness of Allah) and *risalah* (prophethood) - were mentioned clearly,

while the mention of the Hereafter also came up as a corollary, things the confirmation of which was the real purpose of the Sūrah. Along with it, given there was the teaching that it is naturally expected of a true Muslim that he or she would conclude every article, every address and every sitting by admitting and stating the greatness of Allah Ta'ālā, and by saying words of praise for Him. Accordingly, at this place, 'Allāmah al-Qurṭubī has, on his authority, reported this saying of Sayyidnā Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī ﵁:

"I have heard it many times from the Holy Prophet ﷺ that he, after the Ṣalāh was over, used to recite these verses:

سُبْحٰنَ رَبِّکَ رَبِّ الْعِزَّةِ عَمَّا يَصِفُوْنَ

"Pure is your Lord, Lord of great might and honor, from what they describe and salam be on the messengers and all praise belongs to Allah, Lord of the worlds - 180-182 - Qurṭubī.

In addition to that, there are several commentaries in which the following saying of saying of Sayyidnā 'Alī has been reported with reference to Imām al-Baghawi:

"Whoever wishes to have the best of return filled to the brim on the Day of Judgment should recite this at the end of every sitting attended:

سُبْحٰنَ رَبِّکَ رَبِّ الْعِزَّةِ عَمَّا يَصِفُوْنَ

Ibn Abi Hatim has also reported this very saying from a narration of Sha'bi that ascends to the Holy Prophet ﷺ - Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr.

سُبْحٰنَ رَبِّکَ رَبِّ الْعِزَّةِ عَمَّا يَصِفُوْنَ وَسَلَامٌ عَلَى الْمُرْسَلِيْنَ وَالْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ

By the grace of Allah Ta'ālā
The commentary on
Sūrah Aṣ-Ṣaffāt
Ends here.

Sūrah Ṣād

Sūrah Ṣād was revealed in Makkah and it has 88 verses and 5 sections

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 16

صٓ وَالْقُرْاٰنِ ذِی الذِّكْرِ ﴿١﴾ بَلِ الَّذِیْنَ كَفَرُوْا فِیْ عِزَّةٍ وَّ شِقَاقٍ
﴿٢﴾ كَمْ اَهْلَكْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ مِّنْ قَرْنٍ فَنَادَوْا وَّلَاتَ حِیْنَ مَنَاصٍ ﴿٣﴾
وَعَجِبُوْٓا اَنْ جَآءَهُمْ مُّنْذِرٌ مِّنْهُمْ وَقَالَ الْكٰفِرُوْنَ هٰذَا سٰحِرٌ كَذَّابٌ
﴿٤﴾ اَجَعَلَ الْاٰلِهَةَ اِلٰهًا وَّاحِدًا اِنَّ هٰذَا لَشَیْءٌ عُجَابٌ ﴿٥﴾ وَانْطَلَقَ
الْمَلَاُ مِنْهُمْ اَنِ امْشُوْا وَاصْبِرُوْا عَلٰٓی اٰلِهَتِكُمْ اِنَّ هٰذَا لَشَیْءٌ یُّرَادُ
﴿٦﴾ مَا سَمِعْنَا بِهٰذَا فِی الْمِلَّةِ الْاٰخِرَةِ اِنْ هٰذَآ اِلَّا اخْتِلَاقٌ ﴿٧﴾
ءَاُنْزِلَ عَلَیْهِ الذِّكْرُ مِنْۢ بَیْنِنَا بَلْ هُمْ فِیْ شَكٍّ مِّنْ ذِكْرِیْ بَلْ لَّمَّا
یَذُوْقُوْا عَذَابِ ﴿٨﴾ اَمْ عِنْدَهُمْ خَزَآئِنُ رَحْمَةِ رَبِّكَ الْعَزِیْزِ الْوَهَّابِ
﴿٩﴾ اَمْ لَهُمْ مُّلْكُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ وَمَا بَیْنَهُمَا فَلْیَرْتَقُوْا فِی
الْاَسْبَابِ ﴿١٠﴾ جُنْدٌ مَّا هُنَالِكَ مَهْزُوْمٌ مِّنَ الْاَحْزَابِ ﴿١١﴾ كَذَّبَتْ
قَبْلَهُمْ قَوْمُ نُوْحٍ وَّعَادٌ وَّفِرْعَوْنُ ذُو الْاَوْتَادِ ﴿١٢﴾ وَثَمُوْدُ وَقَوْمُ لُوْطٍ
وَّ اَصْحٰبُ لْئَیْكَةِ اُولٰٓئِكَ الْاَحْزَابُ ﴿١٣﴾ اِنْ كُلٌّ اِلَّا كَذَّبَ
الرُّسُلَ فَحَقَّ عِقَابِ ﴿١٤﴾ وَمَا یَنْظُرُ هٰٓؤُلَآءِ اِلَّا صَیْحَةً وَّاحِدَةً مَّا لَهَا
مِنْ فَوَاقٍ ﴿١٥﴾ وَقَالُوْا رَبَّنَا عَجِّلْ لَّنَا قِطَّنَا قَبْلَ یَوْمِ الْحِسَابِ ﴿١٦﴾

Ṣād. By the Qur'ān, (the book) of advice, (this is true,) [1] but those who disbelieve are (involved) in false pride and opposition. [2] How many a generation We have destroyed before them, so they cried out (for mercy), while no time was left for having refuge. [3] And they wonder that a warner has come to them from among themselves. And the disbelievers say, " This is a magician, a sheer liar. [4] Has he (not) turned all the gods into a single God? Certainly, it is a very strange thing." [5] And the leaders among them went forth saying (to their followers)," Walk away (from the Prophet) and stay firm on (adhering to) your gods. This (call of the Prophet) is surely something designed (for his personal benefit). [6] We never heard of it in the former faith (of ours).This is nothing but a false invention. [7] Is it (believable) that the message of advice has been sent down to him (alone) from among all of us?"__ The fact is that they are in doubt about My message; rather, they have not yet tasted My punishment. [8] Do they have the treasures of the mercy of your Lord, the Mighty, the Bountiful? [9] Or do they have the ownership of the heavens and the earth and what lies between them? Then let them ascend (to the sky) by ropes. [10] What is there (in Makkah) is just a host of the (opposing) groups that has to be defeated. [11] Even before them, the people of Nūḥ and 'Ad and Fir'aun (Pharaoh), the man of stakes, [12] and Thamud and the people of Lūṭ and the people of Aykah have rejected (the messengers). They were the (strong) groups. [13] All of them did nothing but declare the messengers as liars; hence, My punishment became due. [14] And these people are waiting for nothing but for a single Cry (the sound of the Trumpet to be blown on the Doomsday) that will have no pause. [15] And they say, " O our Lord, give us our share (of the punishment) sooner, before the Day of Reckoning." [16]

Commentary

The background of the revelation

The background of the revelation of the initial verses of this Sūrah was that Abū Ṭalib, the uncle of the Holy Prophet ﷺ was doing his best as his guardian, despite that he had not yet embraced Islam. When he fell sick, the chiefs of the tribe of Quraish held a consultative meeting in which Abū Jahl, 'Aṣ Ibn Wā'il, Aswad Ibn Muṭṭalib, Aswad Ibn 'Abd Yaghuth and several other chiefs participated. They discussed the

situation they faced. Abū Ṭālib was sick. If he were to pass away and they were to take some strong action against the Holy Prophet ﷺ to restrain his activities in favor of promoting his new faith, the people of Arabia will throw taunts at them and say, 'Here are these people who could do nothing against him while his uncle Abū Ṭālib was alive while, now when he has died, they have stood up against him as their target. So, they came to the conclusion that they should decide this thing about Muḥammad ﷺ while Abū Ṭālib was still alive, so that he would stop speaking ill about their objects of worship.

Accordingly, these people came to Abū Ṭālib and said to him that his nephew spoke ill of their objects of worship. They appealed to his sense of justice, and asked him to tell his nephew that he was free to worship any god he liked, but say nothing against their objects of worship. The truth of the matter was that the Holy Prophet ﷺ himself did not say about these idols anything more than that they were insensate and lifeless. They were not their creators, nor their sustainers, and that nothing that could benefit or harm them was in their control. Abū Ṭālib asked the Holy Prophet ﷺ to come in the meeting. To him, he said, 'My dear nephew, these people are complaining about you that you speak ill of their objects of worship. Leave them on their faith and, on your part, you keep worshiping your God.' People from the Quraish also kept making their comments following it.

Finally, the Holy Prophet ﷺ said, 'My dear uncle, should I not be inviting them to something that is better for them?' Abū Ṭālib said, 'What thing is that?' He said, 'I want them to say a particular *kalīmah* (statement) by virtue of which the whole Arabia will be at their feet, and they will become masters of the non-Arab lands beyond it.' Thereupon, Abū Jahl said, 'Tell us. What that kalimah is? By your father, not simply one kalimah, we are ready to say ten of them.' To this he replied, 'Just say: لَا إِلٰهَ إِلَّا اللّٰهُ (*lā ilaha il-lal-lah*: There is no god (worthy of worship) but Allah). Hearing this, all of them rose to leave saying, 'Are we supposed to leave all objects of worship we have, and take to just one? This is something very strange.' It was on this occasion that these verses of Sūrah Ṣād were revealed. (Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr, pp. 27, 28 v. 4)

In verse 6, it was said: وَانْطَلَقَ الْمَلَأُ مِنْهُمْ ... (And the leaders among them went forth saying (to their followers)," Walk away (from the Prophet) and

stay firm on (adhering to) your gods - 12). This is pointing out to the event mentioned above that, once they heard the call to pure monotheism (*tauhid*), they left the meeting.

وَفِرۡعَوۡنُ ذُو الۡاَوۡتَادِ (and Fir'aun, the man of the stakes - 12). The literal meaning of this expression appearing in verse 12 is 'Pharaoh of the stakes or pegs'. The commentators have explained this phrase in different ways. Some of them have said that this phrase refers to the stability of his dominion, and the sense is that the stakes or pegs of his kingdom were well-rooted in his country. Maulānā Thānavi has translated the phrase according to this explanation. Some others have said that he used to punish people by making them lie flat on the ground and driving stakes or pegs through their hands and feet, and on top of that, he would have snakes and scorpions released over the victim's body. Still others have said that he used to play some kind of a game with ropes and pegs and then, there are those who say that 'al-autad' or pegs means buildings for he had set up very strong structures (Tafsīr Qurṭubī). Pure is Allah who knows best.

اُولٰٓئِکَ الۡاَحۡزَابُ (They were the [strong] groups. - 38:13) One explanation of this statement is that it is the description of the word 'groups' in verse 11. In other words, 'these are the groups or Confederates that have been pointed out in this verse.' Maulānā Thānavi has gone by this Tafsīr in his explanation of the verse. But, other commentators explain it in the sense that actually they were the groups that were really strong, not these people of Makkah. In other words, those who possessed real strength and power were the people of Nūḥ and 'Ad and Thamud and others like them. Compared with them, the *Mushriks* of Makkah were nothing. When such powerful people could not escape Divine punishment, they would hardly count. (Qurṭubī)

The word: فَوَاقٍ (*fawāq*) in verse 15: مَا لَهَا مِنۡ فَوَاقٍ (that will have no pause.) is used in Arabic to convey several meanings. To begin with, '*fawāq*' is the period of time that intervenes between milking an animal and creation of milk in its teats once again. Then, it also means 'comfort.' Whatever the case, the sense is that the Horn (Ṣūr) blown by Sayyidnā Israfīl عليه السلام would be so continuous that there will be no pause in it. (Qurṭubī)

عَجِّل لَّنَا قِطَّنَا (O our Lord, give us our share [of the punishment] sooner, - 38:16). The word: قِطّ (*qiṭṭ*) used here is, in reality, the document through which someone has been promised with a reward. Later, this word came to be used also as a 'share' in an absolute sense. Here, this very sense is meant, that is, 'let us have whatever share is coming to us from the reward and punishment of the Hereafter right here in this world.'

Verses 17 - 20

اِصْبِرْ عَلٰى مَا يَقُوْلُوْنَ وَاذْكُرْ عَبْدَنَا دَاوٗدَ ذَا الْاَيْدِ ۚ اِنَّهٗۤ اَوَّابٌ ﴿۱۷﴾ اِنَّا سَخَّرْنَا الْجِبَالَ مَعَهٗ يُسَبِّحْنَ بِالْعَشِيِّ وَ الْاِشْرَاقِ ﴿۱۸﴾ وَالطَّيْرَ مَحْشُوْرَةً ؕ كُلٌّ لَّهٗۤ اَوَّابٌ ﴿۱۹﴾ وَشَدَدْنَا مُلْكَهٗ وَاٰتَيْنٰهُ الْحِكْمَةَ وَفَصْلَ الْخِطَابِ ﴿۲۰﴾

Bear patiently with what they say, and remember Our slave Dāwūd, the man of might. Surely he was ever-turning to Allah. [17] **We had subjugated the mountains to join him (in) making *tasbiḥ* (i.e. pronouncing Allah's purity) at evening and sunrise,**[18] **and the birds as well, mustered together. All were turning to Allah with him.** [19] **And We made his kingdom strong, and gave him wisdom and decisive speech.** [20]

Commentary

It was said in verse 17: وَاذْكُرْ عَبْدَنَا دَاوٗدَ ذَا الْاَيْدِ (and remember Our servant, Dāwūd, the man of might). Nearly all commentators have explained it in the sense that he used to demonstrate great courage and strength during the course of his acts of worship (*'ibādah*), therefore, soon after it, comes the sentence: اِنَّهٗۤ اَوَّابٌ (Surely, he was ever-turning to Allah - 38:17). Accordingly, in a Ḥadīth of the Ṣaḥīḥayn (al-Bukhārī and Muslim), the Holy Prophet ﷺ said: "In sight of Allah, the most liked Ṣalāh is the Ṣalāh of Dāwūd عليه السلام and the most liked fasts are the fasts of Dāwūd عليه السلام. He would sleep half a night, worship a third of it, and then sleep during the sixth part, and would fast one day and remain without fast on the other; and when he confronted the enemy, he would never desert the battlefield; and, without any doubt, he turned to Allah sincerely and profusely." (Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr)

This method of *'ibādah* has been called most likeable for the initial reason that it is harder. A lifetime of fasting would make one used to it with the result that, after a passage of time, it does not remain that hard. But fasting by skipping a day in between is different. Here, the element of hardship continues. Then, there is another aspect of this method of fasting in that one who fasts in that manner becomes capable of combining his or her *'ibādah* with the necessary fulfillment of the rights of one's self, family and circle of acquaintances.

In verse 18, it was said: إِنَّا سَخَّرْنَا الْجِبَالَ مَعَهُ... (We had subjugated the mountains to join him in making *tasbiḥ* (i.e.pronouncing Allah's purity) at evening and sunrise). In this verse, mention has been made of mountains and birds joining Sayyidnā Dāwūd ﷺ in the act of *tasbiḥ*. Detailed explanation of this phenomenon has already appeared in the commentary on Sūrah Al-Anbiyā' and Saba'. Here, it is worth noting that the *tasbiḥ* of mountains and birds has been mentioned at this place in a manner that it was a particular blessing for Sayyidnā Dāwūd ﷺ. The question is: How did this become a blessing for Sayyidnā Dāwūd ﷺ and what particular benefit accrued from the *tasbiḥ* of mountains and birds?

One answer to this is that it unravels a miracle at the hands of Sayyidnā Dāwūd ﷺ - and it goes without saying that it is a great reward and blessing. In addition to that, Maulānā Thānavi has given a subtle explanation about it. He says that the *tasbiḥ* performed by mountains and birds had created in him a special taste for the remembrance of Allah, something that generates initiative, courage and verve in acts of worship (*'ibādah*). Collective *dhikr* has another benefit - that the Barakah that issues forth from it reflects on each other from the participants. There is a particular method of *dhikr* and spiritual engagement (*shughl*) recognized among the noble Ṣūfis in which the participant imagines that the whole universe is making *dhikr*. This method has an unusual efficacy of its own in correcting and purifying one's inner state as well as in his enthusiasm for '*'ibādah*. The basis of this method of *dhikr* is also deduced from this verse. (Masa'ilu-s- Sulūk, Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānavi)

The Ṣalāh of ad-Duḥā (صلوٰة الضحى)

At the end of verse 18, it was said: بِالْعَشِيِّ وَالْإِشْرَاقِ (at evening and sunrise).

The word: عَشِيّ (*'ashiyy*) used here means the time following Ẓuhr up to the next morning while اِشْرَاق (*ishrāq*) means the time of the morning when sunshine has spread over the land. From this verse, Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ has argued that the Ṣalāh of *ad-duḥā* stands proved. This Ṣalāh is also called the Ṣalāh of al-Awwābīn. There are others who call it the Ṣalāh of al-Ishrāq - though, later on, the name of the Ṣalāh of al-Awwābīn became particularized with the six nafls made after Maghrib, while the Ṣalāh of al-Ishrāq became well known for the two or four nafls offered close after sunrise.

In the Ṣalāh of *ad-duḥā*, one could choose to offer any (even) number of *rak'āt* from two to twelve. Ḥadīth mentions many benefits it brings. According to a narration of Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ﷺ appearing in Jami' of Tirmidhī, the Holy Prophet ﷺ said: "Anyone who were to become particular about two *rak'āt* of the Ṣalāh of *ad-duḥā*, has his sins forgiven - even if they be like the froth of the sea." In another narration from Sayyidnā Anas ﷺ, he is reported to have said: "Anyone who were to make twelve *rak'āt* of the Ṣalāh of ad-duḥā, for him or her Allah Ta'ālā will make a palace of gold in Jannah." (Qurṭubī)

'Ulama' have said that any (even) number of *rak'āt* from two to twelve that can be performed conveniently is correct. But, having some particular routine in the case of its number is better, and if this routine reaches the minimum of four *rak'āt*, it is much better - because, the normal routine of the Holy Prophet ﷺ was to do four *rak'āt*.

The word: اَلْحِكْمَة (*al-ḥikmah*) appearing in verse 38:20: وَاٰتَيْنٰهُ الْحِكْمَةَ وَفَصْلَ الْخِطَابِ (and gave him wisdom, and a decisive speech), as obvious, means wisdom, that is, 'We had blessed him with the precious assets of reason, insight and vision.' Some elders have suggested that it means 'nubuwwah', the station and mission of a prophet. As for the second gift: فَصْلَ الْخِطَابِ (*faṣl al-khiṭāb*: translated here as: a decisive speech), it has been explained in different ways by commentators. Some have said that it means power of oration - and the fact is that Sayyidnā Dāwūd ﷺ was a great orator. He was the first one who started saying اَمَّا بَعْد (*amma ba'd*: after that) following *ḥamd* and Ṣalāh in his religious sermons. Some others have said that it means the ability to make a decision at its best, that is, Allah Ta'ālā had given him the ability and power to resolve disputes and decide matters comprehensively. The truth of the matter is

that the words used in the Qur'ān seem to have ample room for both meanings, and both are meant. Incidentally, the translation done by Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānavi - *'Faisla kar denay wali taqrir'* - helps accommodate both meanings. (And so does the English translation given above.)

Verses 21 - 25

وَهَلْ اَتٰىكَ نَبَؤُا الْخَصْمِ ۘ اِذْ تَسَوَّرُوا الْمِحْرَابَ ﴿٢١﴾ اِذْ دَخَلُوْا عَلٰى
دَاوٗدَ فَفَزِعَ مِنْهُمْ قَالُوْا لَا تَخَفْ ۚ خَصْمٰنِ بَغٰى بَعْضُنَا عَلٰى بَعْضٍ
فَاحْكُمْ بَيْنَنَا بِالْحَقِّ وَلَا تُشْطِطْ وَاهْدِنَآ اِلٰى سَوَآءِ الصِّرَاطِ ﴿٢٢﴾
اِنَّ هٰذَآ اَخِيْ ۣ لَهٗ تِسْعٌ وَّتِسْعُوْنَ نَعْجَةً وَّلِيَ نَعْجَةٌ وَّاحِدَةٌ ۣ فَقَالَ
اَكْفِلْنِيْهَا وَعَزَّنِيْ فِي الْخِطَابِ ﴿٢٣﴾ قَالَ لَقَدْ ظَلَمَكَ بِسُؤَالِ
نَعْجَتِكَ اِلٰى نِعَاجِهٖ وَاِنَّ كَثِيْرًا مِّنَ الْخُلَطَآءِ لَيَبْغِيْ بَعْضُهُمْ عَلٰى
بَعْضٍ اِلَّا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ وَقَلِيْلٌ مَّا هُمْ ۭ وَظَنَّ دَاوٗدُ
اَنَّمَا فَتَنّٰهُ فَاسْتَغْفَرَ رَبَّهٗ وَخَرَّ رَاكِعًا وَّاَنَابَ ﴿٢٤﴾ فَغَفَرْنَا لَهٗ ذٰلِكَ ۭ
وَاِنَّ لَهٗ عِنْدَنَا لَزُلْفٰى وَحُسْنَ مَاٰبٍ ﴿٢٥﴾

And has there come to you the story of the litigants, when they entered the sanctuary by climbing over the wall? [21] When they entered upon Dāwūd, and he was scared of them, they said, " Be not scared. We are two litigants; one of us has wronged the other, so decide between us with truth, and do not cross the limits, and guide us to the right path. [22] This is my brother; he has ninety nine ewes, and I have a single ewe; still he said, 'Give it into my charge.' And he overpowered me in speech." [23] He (Dāwūd) said, "He has certainly wronged you by demanding your ewe to be added to his ewe. And many partners oppress one another, except those who believe and do righteous deeds, and very few they are." And Dāwūd realized that We had put him to a test, so he prayed to his Lord for forgiveness, and bowing down, he fell in prostration, and turned (to Allah). [24] So we forgave him that (lapse), and surely he

has a place of nearness in Our presence, and an excellent resort. [25]

Commentary

In these verses, Allah Ta'ālā has mentioned an event relating to Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام. The way in which this event has been described in the noble Qur'ān, it tells only this much that Allah Ta'ālā had put him to some test by sending two disputing parties into his place of worship. Alerted thereby, Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام sought forgiveness from Allah Ta'ālā, and fell in prostration, and He forgave him. Since the real purpose of the noble Qur'ān at this place is to communicate that Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام used to turn to Allah Ta'ālā in every matter of concern he faced, and should he ever sense the least slip issuing forth from him, he would immediately seek forgiveness for it. Therefore, no details have been given as to what that test was, and what was that slip he committed against which he sought forgiveness, something that Allah Ta'ālā forgave him for.

Therefore, some investigative and cautious commentators have said in their explanation of these verses that Allah Ta'ālā has not given a detailed description of this slip and test relating to this great prophet of His due to some particular wise consideration. Hence, we too should not go about pursuing it, and whatever has been mentioned in the noble Qur'ān should be precisely what we should believe in. Even a great research-oriented commentator of the class of Ibn Kathīr has elected to follow this rule and has observed silence as far as details of this event are concerned. Then there is no doubt that this is the ideal course of caution, moderation and sound policy. Therefore, the learned from among the early forbears of Islam (*salaf*) used to say: ابهموا ما ابهمه الله (What Allah has left ambiguous, you too let it remain ambiguous). In this, there is wisdom, and expedient consideration. Then, it is obvious that it means the ambiguity of matters that do not relate to what we do and what we take as halal and haram and, as for matters that concern the collective deeds of Muslims, any ambiguity existing there has already been removed by the Holy Prophet ﷺ through his word and deed.

But, there are other commentators who have tried to determine the exact nature of this test and trial in the light of pre-Islam narratives. In this connection, there is that vulgar yarn that Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام

happened to have cast a look at the wife of Uriah, who was one of his military officers, that put the desire of marrying her in his heart and he, in order to get Uriah killed, entrusted with him a dangerous mission in which he was really killed and later on, he married his wife. It was to admonish him on this act of his that these two angels were sent in human form and shape.

But, this narrative is doubtlessly from among the absurdities that had found currency among Muslims under the influence of Jews. This narrative has been taken from the Bible, the Book of Samuel II, chap. 11. The only difference is that, in the cited reference, an open charge has been leveled against Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام that he had (refuge with Allah) committed adultery with the wife of Uriah prior to marriage. As for these narratives accommodated in some exegetical works, the part relating to adultery has been deleted. It appears that someone looked at the Judaic narrative, took out the allegation of adultery, and did an edit-copy-paste job while explaining the above mentioned verses of the noble Qur'ān - although, this book of Samuel itself is inherently baseless, while this narrative has the status of absolute lie and fabrication. For this reason, all authentic commentators have sternly rejected it.

In addition to Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Kathīr, 'Allāmah Ibn Jauzī, Qāḍī Abu-s-Sa'ūd, Qāḍī al-Baidawī, Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ, Imām Rāzī, 'Allāmah Abū Ḥayyān al-Andalusī, Khāzin, Zamakhsharī, Ibn Ḥazm, 'Allāmah Khafāji, Aḥmad Ibn Naṣr, Abū Tammām, 'Allāmah 'Ālūsi and many others have declared it to be a lie and fabrication. Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Kathīr writes:

> "Some commentators have mentioned a tale at this point most of which has been taken from Judaic narrations. Nothing the following of which is obligatory is proved in this matter on the authority of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Only Ibn Abī Ḥatim has reported a Ḥadīth here, but its authority is unsound."

In short, in the light of many proofs - some detail of which is available in Tafsīr Kabīr of Imām Rāzī and Zād-ul-Masīr of Ibn-ul-Jauzī - this Ḥadīth report goes out of the pale of discussion totally as far as the Tafsīr of this verse is concerned.

Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānavi has explained this element of test by saying that these two adversaries climbed over the wall, barged in and started addressing him so insolently that they started off by asking

Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام to be just and not to be unjust. This audacity would have been reason enough for an ordinary person who would have answered them only by punishing them. Allah Ta'ālā tested Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام by seeing whether he too is enraged and punishes him or listens to them demonstrating the high moral traits of pardon and forbearance.

Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام came out successful in this test, except a little slip that remained - when he was giving his verdict, rather than address the perpetrator of injustice, he addressed the one oppressed which betrayed a certain element of partisanship - but, he immediately got alerted, fell down in prostration and Allah Ta'ālā forgave him. (Bayān-ul-Qur'ān)

According to the explanation of this 'slip' given by some commentators, when Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام found the defendant silent, it was without listening to what he had to say, and rather having listened to the plaintiff only, he said things as part of his advice that virtually appeared to be supportive of the plaintiff - although, he should have first asked the defendant as to what his stand was. This statement of Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام was, though, simply advisory in nature, and time has not yet arrived for the final judgment in the case, however, for a great prophet of his caliber, it was not befitting. To this very thing he was later alerted and fell into prostration. (Rūḥ-ul- Ma'ānī)

Some others have said that Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام had managed his time in a manner that every twenty four hours of a day and night one or the other member of his household would be found engaged in some act of devotion to Allah like *'ibādah*, *dhikr* and *tasbiḥ*. On a certain day, he submitted before Allah Ta'ālā, 'My Lord, there is not a single moment of day and night during which one or the other member of the household of Dāwūd is not busy with *'ibādah*, Ṣalāh, *tasbiḥ* and dhikr before Thee!' Allah Ta'ālā said, 'O Dāwūd, all this comes from My *taufīq*. If I do not help you do it, you cannot do it on your own - and one of these days I am going to leave you on your own.' Thereafter, came a day when something different took place. That was a time when Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام was supposed to be engaged in worship. When this unforeseen thing happened, his timetable was shattered, and he got busy with resolving a dispute. No other member of the household of Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام was

engaged in remembering Allah at that time. Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام was alerted immediately. He recalled the self-congratulatory statement that had slipped out of his tongue. He realized he had made a mistake. Therefore, he sought the forgiveness of Allah and fell in prostration. This explanation is supported by a saying of Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه which has been reported in the Mustadrak of Ḥākim with sound chains of authority. (Ahkam-ul- Qur'ān)

It has been unanimously agreed upon in these explanations that this litigation was not hypothetical. In fact, it was real and the form of the litigation had nothing to do with the test or slip of Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام. Contrary to this, many commentators have explained it in a manner that postulates that parties to this dispute were not human beings. Rather, they were angels, and Allah Ta'ālā had sent them to present such a simulated form of litigation as would alert Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام to his slip.

Accordingly, these commentators say that as far as this story of the killing of Uriah and marrying his wife is concerned, it is incorrect. But, conditions that actually prevailed among the people of Banī Isra'īl were such that asking someone - 'divorce you wife and give her in marriage to me' - was not considered offensive. This kind of request had also become customary at that time, and was not taken to be impolite as well. It was in this prevailing climate and on this basis that Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام had made his request to Uriah whereupon Allah Ta'ālā alerted him by sending these two angels. Some others have said that this was a simple matter. Uriah had already sent a proposal to a woman. Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام happened to send his proposal to the same woman. This hurt Uriah. Thereupon, as admonition, Allah Ta'ālā sent these two angels and alerted him to his slip in a subtle manner. Qāḍī Abū Ya'lā has based his argument on the words of the Qur'ān: وَعَزَّنِى فِى الْخِطَابِ (And he overpowered me in speech - 23). He says that this sentence supports the view that this matter came to pass only in connection with: خِطْبَه (*khiṭbah*: proposal of marriage), for Dāwūd عليه السلام has not yet married her. (Zād-ul- Masīr by Ibn-ul-Jauzī, p. 116, v. 7)

Most commentators have preferred the last two explanations, and they find support in some reports from the Ṣaḥābah (please see Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī, Tafsīr Abī-s- Sa'ūd, Zād-ul-Masīr, Tafsīr Kabīr etc.) But, the truth

of the matter is that any detail of this test or slip is neither proved from the Qur'ān, nor from some Ṣaḥīḥ Ḥadīth. Therefore, at least this much stands settled that this widely known story of having Uriah killed is incorrect. But, about the actual event, all probabilities mentioned above exist, and no one of these can be called absolute and certain. Therefore, the safest way out is what Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Kathīr has taken: 'That which Allah Ta'ālā has left ambiguous should be left as is. We should not force out its details through our guesses and conjectures - particularly when no deed of ours hinges on it. Certainly there is some wisdom in this ambiguity as well. Therefore, one should believe in as much as has been mentioned in the Qur'ān. As for the details, let these be resigned to Allah. Nevertheless, since there are many benefits that issue forth from this event, more attention should be paid to these. Therefore, let us now turn to an explanation of the verses where, *insha'Allah,* these beneficial notes will keep appearing as we go along.

In the first verse (21), it was said: إِذْ تَسَوَّرُوا الْمِحْرَابَ (when they entered the sanctuary by climbing over the wall?). The word: مِحْرَابَ (*miḥrāb*) is essentially applied to an elevated chamber, or the front elevation of a house. Later, the front portion of a mosque or any other House of Worship came to be called by that name in particular. In the Qur'ān, this word has been used in the sense of a place of worship. 'Allāmah Suyūṭī has written that contemporary arched mihrabs of mosques in vogue now were not present during the time of the Holy Prophet ﷺ (Rūḥ-ul- Ma'ānī).

About Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام, it was said in verse 22: فَفَزِعَ مِنْهُمْ (and he was scared of them). The reason of being scared was quite obvious. Two men barging into one's privacy in that manner at an odd hour beating the security cordon can only be because of some bad intention in most cases.

Natural fear is not contrary to the station of a prophet or man of Allah

This tells us that being naturally affected at the sight of something fearful is not contrary to the station of a prophet or man of Allah. Yes, allowing this fear to overtake one's heart and mind and abandoning duties enjoined is certainly bad. Hence, a doubt may arise here. Is it not that the Qur'ān portrays the elegant status of the noble prophets by saying: لَا يَخْشَوْنَ اَحَدًا اِلَّا اللّٰهَ (They do not fear anyone but Allah - Al-Aḥzāb,

33:39)? Why then, was Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام in fear on this occasion? For an answer, it could be said that there are two kinds of fear. There is the fear that comes from being hurt by what causes pain. In Arabic, this is called: خَوْف (*khauf*: fear). Then there is the other kind of fear. This emerges because of someone great, majestic, awesome. This is called: خَشْيَة (*khashyah*: awe) (al-Mufradāt, Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī). There should be no *khashiyah* for anyone other than Allah - and noble prophets, may peace be on them all, are exactly like that. They are not awed by anyone. Yes, as said earlier, one can have a feeling of fear from naturally hurtful things.

Observe patience against contravention of established rules of etiquette until attending circumstances unfold

The statement in verse 22: قَالُوْا لَا تَخَفْ (They said: "Be not scared") was made by the sudden entrants who said this and then started telling Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام what they wanted to while he kept listening to them silently. This tells us that, should someone commit something irregular all of a sudden, one should not start rebuking and chastising him for that on the spur of the moment, instead, one should first listen to what he has to say, so that one can find out whether or not this person had any justification for his irregular behavior. Had it been someone else, he would have unleashed his anger against such unauthorized entrants on the spot. But, Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام waited till the reality was unfolded, may be these people had some genuine excuse.

The entrant also said: وَلَا تُشْطِطْ (and do not cross the limits - 38:22). This manner of address was obviously very audacious as coming from a stranger. First of all, they came at a late hour, and that too by climbing over the wall. Then, once they were in, they started teaching a prophet as august as Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام lessons in morality by asking him to be just and not to be unjust. All this was heedless simplicity. But, Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام observed patience over whatever they did and said, and just avoided telling anything bad to them in response.

A man of stature should observe patience to the best of his ability over errors made by those in need

This tells us that a person whom Allah has blessed with some high rank - and the needs of people are tied to him should do his best to remain patient over their irregular behavior and errors of expression, for this is

the demand of his rank or office. Particularly so, a Ḥākim (official of the government), a Qāḍī (judge of the judiciary) and a Muftī (authentic consultant responsible for giving fatwa in the light of Islam's sources of jurisprudence) should pay full attention to this need. (Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī)

Verse 24 opens with the words: قَالَ لَقَدْ ظَلَمَكَ بِسُؤَالِ نَعْجَتِكَ اِلٰى نِعَاجِهٖ (He said, 'He has certainly wronged you by demanding your ewe to be added to his ewe.'). Two things are worth pondering here. First of all, Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام made this statement simply after having listened to the plaintiff. He did not hear the statement of the respondent. About it, some elders have said that this was the slip for which he sought forgiveness from Allah. But, other commentators have said that, in reality, full details of the litigation are not being described here. Taken up here is only what was necessary. Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام must have surely heard the stand of the defendant. But, it was not described here for the reason that this is the recognized method when judgments are delivered. Everyone can understand that the part relating to asking the defendant at this place is elided (understood).

In addition to that, it is also possible that, though the visitors had asked Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام for a court judgment, but that was no time for a court session, nor was it a judicial sitting, nor Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام had the necessary resources available at hand in order to implement his judgment, therefore, he did not give his judgment in the status of a qadi (judge), instead, what he gave was a fatwa (ruling) in his status as a mufti (juri-consult) - and it is not the job of a mufti to go about investigating into the nature of an event, rather, the thing depends on the question asked, and it is in accordance with it that he has to give his answer.

Soliciting contribution, or even gift, under pressure of any kind is usurpation

Something else worth pondering here is that Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام equated the act of a person demanding simply an ewe with injustice or oppression - although, casually asking someone for something is not a crime. The reason is that the form in which it was being asked did have the outward anatomy of a request. But, in the presence of the amount of verbal and practical pressure being put behind this asking, this thing had assumed the proportions of usurpation, something being taken forcibly,

compulsively, illegally or by extortion.

From here we learn that, should a person ask for something from someone in a manner that the addressee, whether willing or unwilling, is left with no way out other than giving it, then, (soliciting aside) even demanding a gift in that manner is also included under *ghasb* or usurpation. Therefore, if the person asking is a man of office or power, or someone respectable and elegant-looking - and the addressee cannot afford to say no because of the pressure of this man's personality - then, even if the form of the situation is that of soliciting a gift, but in reality, it translates as nothing but ghasb or usurpation, and, the use of the thing acquired in this manner is never permissible for the person asking for it. This point needs the particular attention of those who solicit and receive contributions for *madaris* and *makātib* (religious schools), *masajid* (mosques) or societies and associations in the religious field. For them, only that donation is halal and good that has been given to them by the donor voluntarily and cheerfully. If those seeking such contributions use the pressure of their personality or eight or ten of them simultaneously descend on someone, render him helpless, and succeed in gouging that contribution out of him, then, this would be a flagrantly impermissible act on their part. The Ḥadīth carries a very clear statement of the Holy Prophet ﷺ in this matter:

لایحلّ مال امرئٍ مسلم اِلاّ بطیب نفس منه

> The property of a Muslim is not halal unless it is with his sweet will.

Partnership in transactions needs great caution

In verse 24, it was said: وَاِنَّ كَثِيْرًا مِّنَ الْخُلَطَآءِ لَيَبْغِىْ بَعْضُهُمْ عَلٰى بَعْضٍ (And many partners oppress one another). By saying this, we have been alerted that it is not unusual when mutual rights are compromised between two persons having a partnership deal. There are occasions when one of them would take something as ordinary, and goes ahead and does it. But, in reality, it becomes the cause of sin. Therefore, great caution is needed in this matter.

Later, in the same verse, it was said: وَظَنَّ دَاوٗدُ اَنَّمَا فَتَنّٰهُ (And Dāwūd realized that We had put him to a test,- 38:24). If the form of the litigation is taken to be a similitude of the slip of Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام, then, the

occurring of such a thought is fairly obvious. And if the form of the litigation has nothing to do with it, even then, the overall condition of the parties involved was enough to show that the two of them have been sent by way of a test. On the one hand, these disputants were in such hurry to get their litigation resolved that they were audacious enough to jump the wall and barge in. On the other hand, when the case was presented, the defendant sat silent and accepted, verbally or practically, the plea of the plaintiff without any ifs and buts.

If the defendant agreed with the event as described by the plaintiff, he hardly had the need to come to Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام to seek a verdict in the dispute. Even a person of average intelligence could have gathered that, in this situation, Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام will invariably decide in favor of the plaintiff. This mysterious conduct of the two disputants was betraying that it was an event of some extraordinary nature. Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام had no difficulty in seeing through it, that they had come as sent from Allah and their objective was to test him. In some narrations, it also appears that, after having heard the verdict, they exchanged furtive smiles, and in no time disappeared into the skies. Allah knows best.

In the last sentence of verse 24, it was said: فَاسْتَغْفَرَ رَبَّهُ وَخَرَّ رَاكِعًا وَّ اَنَابَ (so he prayed to his Lord for forgiveness, and bowing down, he fell in prostration, and turned [to Allah].). It should be noted that the word used here is that of: رُكُوع (*rukū'*) which literally means 'to bow down' while, with most commentators, it denotes سَجْدَة (*sajdah*: prostration). According to the Ḥanafiyyah, by reciting this verse, *sajdah* becomes obligatory.

By doing *rukū'* the *sajdah* of *tilāwah* (recitation) stands performed

And Imām Abū Ḥanīfah has proved from this verse that, in case a verse requiring *sajdah* has been recited within the Ṣalāh, then, forming the intention of *sajdah* in the *ruku'* makes the obligation of *sajdah* stand performed. The reason is that here Allah Ta'ālā has used the word: رُكُوع (*rukū'*) for: سَجْدَة (*sajdah*) which proves that *rukū'* too can become the replacement of *sajdah*. But, in this connection, a few necessary points should be borne in mind.

The sajdah of *tilawah* (recitation): Some rulings.

1. Sajdah when being performed through an obligatory *rukū'* in

Ṣalāh can only be performed validly on condition that the verse of sajdah has been recited within the Ṣalāh. When reciting the Qur'ān outside the Ṣalāh, the *sajdah* of *tilāwah* cannot be performed validly through a *rukū'*. The reason is that *rukū'* is an act of *'ibādah* only in Ṣalāh - outside Ṣalāh, it is not recognized as an act of worship. (Badā'i').

2. A *rukū'* can stand for *sajdah* of *tilāwah* only when *rukū'* has been done soon after having recited the verse of sajdah or having recited at the most two or three additional verses. And if, after the verse of *sajdah*, one has made a long recitation in the standing position, the *rukū'* would not stand for *sajdah*.

3. If one is thinking of performing the *sajdah* of *tilāwah* in the position of *rukū'*, then, he should better make the intention of the *sajdah* of *tilawah* while bowing down for the *rukū'*, otherwise, the obligation of sajdah will not stand discharged by this *rukū'*. Yes, once the person starts going for sajdah, the sajdah will stand performed even without the intention.

4. The preferred practice, however, in any case is that the *sajdah* of tilawah is performed as a regular *sajdah* before *rukū'*, and then, one rises from the state of *sajdah*, recites one or two verses and then goes for *rukū'*, rather than it is performed in the obligatory *rukū'* of the Ṣalāh. (BadB'i ').

In verse 25, it was said: وَإِنَّ لَهُ عِندَنَا لَزُلْفَى وَحُسْنَ مَآبٍ (and surely he has a place of nearness in Our presence, and an excellent resort.). By concluding this event on this verse, a hint was released towards the fact that, no matter whatever the slip of Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام would have been, once he had sought forgiveness from Allah and had passionately turned to Him, it goes without saying that the level of his communion with Allah Ta'ālā had increased further.

When warn, warn with wisdom!

Yet another aspect of this event needs to be mentioned here. Let this slip of Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام be whatever it was, it was a matter between him and his Lord who could have alerted him to it even directly through a revelation. But, rather than do something of this nature, why was a particular method used when the case of a dispute was sent in his court to alert him thereby? The truth of the matter is that this method invites deliberation. It helps us realize that it provides guidance for those who

are engaged in preaching and bidding the Fair and forbidding the Unfair. Those who do their duty in this field should know that the conduct of a person is not to be corrected casually. It takes a lot of wisdom to do it. To alert someone to his error, it is better to take to a method that helps the concerned person realize his error on his own, without having recourse to warn him verbally. For that purpose, it is more effective to use such examples as may convey the message without hurting the addressee in the least.

Verse 26

يٰدَاوٗدُ اِنَّا جَعَلْنٰكَ خَلِيْفَةً فِي الْاَرْضِ فَاحْكُمْ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ بِالْحَقِّ وَلَا تَتَّبِعِ الْهَوٰى فَيُضِلَّكَ عَنْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ ؕ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ يَضِلُّوْنَ عَنْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ شَدِيْدٌۢ بِمَا نَسُوْا يَوْمَ الْحِسَابِ ﴿۲۶﴾

O Dāwūd, We have made you a vicegerent on earth, so judge between people with truth, and do not follow the selfish desire, lest it should lead you astray from Allah's path. Surely those who go astray from Allah's path will have a severe punishment, because they had forgotten the Day of Reckoning. [26]

Commentary

Not only that Allah Ta'ālā had made Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام a prophet, He had also placed a government and state at his command. Accordingly, in this verse, he has been entrusted with a basic guideline for the conduct of governance and politics. Three things have been said in this guideline:

1. We have made you Our *khalifah* (caliph, deputy, successor, vicar, vicegerent) on the earth.

2. In this capacity, your basic duty is to decide matters in accordance with the truth.

3. And to accomplish this mission, abstention from following personal desires is a binding condition.

As for the sense of making someone a khalifah on the earth, it has been discussed in the commentary on Sūrah Al-Baqarah (please see Ma'āriful-Qur'ān, English, Volume I, pages 158-171) and from it emerges the

essential principle of Islamic political theory that "Sovereignty belongs to Allah Ta'ālā." All rulers of the earth are bound to operate in accordance with His injunctions alone. They cannot go out of it. Therefore, the ruler of Muslims, the consultative body or assembly might explain or codify Islamic law as such, but the reality is that they are not lawgivers, instead, are introducers of the law of Allah.

The basic function of an Islamic state is to establish truth

Secondly, it has been made very clear here that the basic function of an Islamic state is to establish truth. It is incumbent on the government that it should establish the rule of truth and justice in all its matters from administration to resolution of disputes.

Since Islam is a religion for all times to come, it has not fixed such administrative details as would have to be changed with changing circumstances. Instead of that, it has blessed its followers with the basic guidelines in the light of which administrative details can be settled according to the needs of every period of time. Therefore, no doubt, this much has been made clear here that the essential function of the government is to establish truth, but along with it, its administrative details have been left in the safe hands of sound thinking Muslims of every period.

The relationship of the Judiciary and the Executive

Accordingly, no such fixed injunction as would stand unalterable in every period of time has been given on the issue of whether the Judiciary remains separate from the Executive or remains part of it. If, in some period of time, full trust can be placed in the honesty and trustworthiness of the rulers, the duality of the judiciary and the executive branches of the government can be eliminated - and if, in a certain period, full trust cannot be placed in the honesty and trustworthiness of the rulers, the Judiciary can also be kept totally independent of the Executive.

Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام was a great prophet of Allah. Who could have claimed to be as honest and trustworthy as he was? Therefore, he was simultaneously made the head of both the Executive and the Judiciary who also had the responsibility of delivering a verdict in disputes. In addition to the noble prophets عليهم السلام, the same practice continued among the rightly guided *khulafa'* of the Muslim community (*al-khulafa'*

ar-rashidūn) when the *amirul-mu'minīn* (the leader of Muslims or head of the Muslim state) used to be the Qāḍī (judge) as well. This practice was discontinued by later Islamic governments when the *amirul-mu'minīn* was made the head of the Executive, and the qadi-l-qudat (Chief Justice) that of the Judiciary.

The third guideline on which the heaviest stress has been laid in this verse simply says: Do not follow the desires of your self and keep the day of Reckoning in sight all the time. The reason for such a stress is that this thing is the very foundation of any effort to establish the supremacy of truth. Only a Ḥākim (ruler) or Qāḍī (judge) who has the fear of Allah and the concern of Hereafter in his heart can establish the supremacy of truth and justice in the real sense of the term. Nothing short of this would work. You are welcome to make laws, the best you can. The ability of the desiring human self to conceal its stratagems and carve out an operational outlet through any law or system is virtually unbeatable. As long as this thing is there, the best of law and system cannot establish the rule of law, truth and justice. The history of the world and the current scenario of our time bear witness to this submission.

The first thing to watch around offices charged with responsibility is the character of the human being sitting there

Right from here we also learn that in order to place someone in a position of authority, such as an official of the government, or a judge of the judiciary (or someone in any other role of public or private responsibility), the first thing one has to look for is whether or not this person has the fear of Allah in his heart, the concern for 'Ākhirah, the life to come on his mind and, of course, the state of his morals and character. If it is realized that he has nothing of the sort as the fear of Allah in his heart, instead, his desiring self sits there as the monarch of all it surveys, then, no matter how high his degrees in education, and no matter how superb his expertise and experience in the field, he is not deserving of any high office of responsibility in the sight of Islam.

Verses 27 - 29

وَمَا خَلَقْنَا السَّمَآءَ وَالْاَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا بَاطِلاً ط ذٰلِكَ ظَنُّ الَّذِيْنَ
كَفَرُوْا ج فَوَيْلٌ لِّلَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا مِنَ النَّارِ ﴿٢٧﴾ اَمْ نَجْعَلُ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا

وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ كَالْمُفْسِدِيْنَ فِى الْاَرْضِ ۡ اَمْ نَجْعَلُ الْمُتَّقِيْنَ
كَالْفُجَّارِ ﴿۲۸﴾ كِتٰبٌ اَنْزَلْنٰهُ اِلَيْكَ مُبٰرَكٌ لِّيَدَّبَّرُوْٓا اٰيٰتِهٖ وَلِيَتَذَكَّرَ
اُولُوا الْاَلْبَابِ ﴿۲۹﴾

And We did not create the heavens and the earth and what is between them in vain. That is the thinking of those who disbelieve. So, woe to the disbelievers because of the Fire (they have to face). [27] **Shall We make those who believe and do righteous deeds equal to those who commit mischief on the earth? Or shall We make the God-fearing equal to the sinners?** [28] **This is a blessed Book We have revealed to you, so that they deliberate in its verses and, and so that the men of understanding may take to advice.** [29]

Commentary

The delicate order of the verses

These verses in which the basic beliefs of Islam, particularly that of the Hereafter, have been emphatically confirmed appear in between the description of events relating to Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام with an order that is extremely delicate and sublime. Says Imām Rāzī, if someone is refusing to understand because of obstinacy, the wiser approach is to put away the subject under discussion aside, and start talking about something totally unrelated - and when his mind stands diverted from the first subject, he should be brought around during the flow of conversation to concede to the original proposition. At this place, it is to dwell upon and secure confirmation of the Hereafter that this very method has been used. Being mentioned before the description of the event relating to Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام there were some postures of obstinacy demonstrated by the disbelievers that concluded at the verse: وَقَالُوْا رَبَّنَا عَجِّلْ لَّنَا قِطَّنَا قَبْلَ يَوْمِ الْحِسَابِ (And they said, " O our Lord, give us our share [of the punishment] sooner, before the Day of Reckoning." - 38:16). The outcome of all this was to state that those people rejected the existence of the Hereafter and made fun of it. Immediately after that, it was said: اِصْبِرْ عَلٰى مَايَقُوْلُوْنَ وَاذْكُرْ عَبْدَنَا دَاوٗدَ (Observe patience over what they say and remember Our servant, Dāwūd - 38:17). By saying so, a new subject was introduced. But, the event relating to Sayyidnā Dāwūd عليه السلام has been concluded with the statement:

> O Dāwūd, We have made you a vicegerent on earth, so judge between people with truth. (38:26).

Now, from here it is in an imperceptible manner that the Hereafter has been positively confirmed by positing that here is the supreme Being of Allah asking his deputy on the earth to establish the rule of law and justice resulting in punishment for the evil and peace for the good - when so, is it not that the same Being would necessarily establish justice and equity in this universe? Most certainly, it is the dictate of His wisdom that He, rather than herd everyone good or bad with the same stick, punishes the doers of evil and rewards the doers of good. This, then, is the purpose of the creation of this universe, and in order that it translates into reality, it is necessary that there be a Qiyāmah (the Last Day) and an 'Ākhirah (the Hereafter) - something that precisely corresponds to His wisdom. Those who reject the Hereafter are virtually saying that this universe has been created aimlessly, devoid of any wisdom behind it, for everyone good or bad will live his or her time and die with nobody around to ask questions - although, one who has faith in the wisdom of Allah Ta'ālā can never accept this line of reasoning.

In verse 28, it was said: اَمْ نَجْعَلُ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا (الی قوله تعالیٰ) كَالْفُجَّارِ (Shall We make those who believe and do righteous deeds equal to those who commit mischief on the earth? Or shall We make the God-fearing equal to the sinners?) - that is, this can never be. In fact, the end of both will be totally different. Right from here, we learn that this difference between a believer and disbeliever is there in terms of the injunctions of the Hereafter. While living in the present world, it is quite possible that a disbeliever has a lot more comforts than a believer. Likewise, it cannot be deduced thereby that the material rights of the disbeliever cannot be equal to the rights of the believer, instead, the truth of the matter is that a disbeliever could be allowed human rights equal to a believer. Accordingly, non-Muslim minorities who live in an Islamic state under mutual pledges shall be given all human rights that will be but equal to those of Muslim.

Verses 30 - 33

وَوَهَبْنَا لِدَاوٗدَ سُلَيْمٰنَ ؕ نِعْمَ الْعَبْدُ ؕ اِنَّهٗۤ اَوَّابٌ ﴿۳۰﴾ؕ اِذْ عُرِضَ عَلَيْهِ

بِالْعَشِيِّ الصّٰفِنٰتُ الْجِيَادُ ﴿٣١﴾ فَقَالَ اِنِّيْٓ اَحْبَبْتُ حُبَّ الْخَيْرِ عَنْ
ذِكْرِ رَبِّيْ ۚ حَتّٰى تَوَارَتْ بِالْحِجَابِ ﴿٣٢﴾ رُدُّوْهَا عَلَيَّ ۭ فَطَفِقَ
مَسْحًاۢ بِالسُّوْقِ وَالْاَعْنَاقِ ﴿٣٣﴾

And We blessed Dāwūd with Sulaymān. He was an excellent slave (of Allah). Surely, he was great in turning (to Us, in penitence and praise). [30] **(Worth remembering is the incident) when the swift horses of high breeding were presented before him in the evening.** [31] **He said, " I held the love of the good things (i.e. these horses) dearer than the remembrance of my Lord, until it (the sun) went behind the veil.** [32] **Bring them back to me" - and he started passing his hands over the shanks and the necks.** [33]

Commentary

In these verses, an event relating to Sayyidnā Sulaymān عليه السلام has been mentioned. The gist of the well known Tafsīr of this event is that Sayyidnā Sulaymān عليه السلام was so engrossed in the inspection of the horses that he missed to perform the Ṣalāh of Al-'Aṣr at his usual time. Later, when he was alerted to this loss, he slaughtered all those horses as the unfortunate interference in the remembrance of Allah took place because of them.

This missed Ṣalāh could be a *nafl ṣalāh*. Given this situation, there should be no difficulty in understanding what Sulaymān عليه السلام did, for the noble prophets try to make amends for even this much of negligence. And it is also possible that the Ṣalāh concerned was obligatory (*farḍ*) and his engrossment in the inspection might have caused him to forget. Although if someone forgets to perform the *fard* (obligatory) Ṣalāh, it does not cause a sin to have been committed, but Sayyidnā Sulaymān عليه السلام, in view of his high station, expiated for that too.

This Tafsīr of the cited verses has been reported from several leading authorities among the commentators. Even a great scholar of Ibn Kathīr's stature has preferred this Tafsīr. Then, it is also supported by a *marfu'* Ḥadīth (attributed to the noble Prophet ﷺ) reported by 'Allamah Suyuti with reference to the Mu'jim of aṬabarānī, Isma'īlī and Ibn Marduwayh:

عن ابی بن كعب رضى الله عنه عن النّبى صلى الله عليه وسلّم فى قوله فطفق مسحًا بالسّوق والاعناق قال قطع سوقها وأعنا قها بالسيف)

From 'Ubaiyy Ibn Ka'b ﷺ, from the Holy Prophet ﷺ: About the word of Allah: (and he started passing his hands over the shanks and the necks.), he said: "Cut their legs and necks with the sword."

'Allāmah Suyūṭī has declared its rating as Ḥasan. (ad-Durr-ul-Manthūr, p. 309, v. 5) and quoting this Ḥadīth in Majma'-uz-Zawa'id, 'Allāmah Haithami says:

> 'Ṭabarānī has reported this in al-Awsat. Sa'īd Ibn Bashīr is one of the narrators there. He has been called trustworthy by Shu'bah and others. Ibn Ma'in and others call him weak. The rest of the men reporting are trustworthy.' (Majma'-uz-Zawa'id, p. 99, v. 7, Kitabu-t-Tafsīr)

Because of this Ḥadīth, this Tafsīr becomes fairly strong. But, it generally lends to the doubt that the horses were a gift of Allah and wasting one's property in that manner does not seem to befit the station of a prophet. Commentators have answered it by saying that Sayyidnā Sulaymān ﷺ owned these horses, and the sacrifice of horses was also permissible in his code of law very similar to that of cows, goats and camels. Therefore, he never wasted the horses, in fact, sacrificed them in the name of Allah. Just as the act of sacrificing a cow or goat is not tantamount to wasting it, instead, it is an act of *'ibādah*, the sacrifice of horses offered by him was nothing but an act of *'ibādah* (Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī).

Most commentators have explained this verse in this very manner. But, there is another Tafsīr of these verses reported from Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ where the description of the event differs. A gist of the Tafsīr is that the horses presented before Sayyidnā Sulaymān ﷺ were specially prepared for Jihād. Sayyidnā Sulaymān ﷺ was pleased to see them while he also said that the attachment he had to those horses was not because he loved worldly life, rather it was because of his remembrance of Allah in that these were prepared for Jihād, and Jihād was and act of worship at its highest. In the meantime, that lineup of horses went out of his sight. He asked that they be brought back again. Accordingly, when they appeared before him once again, he started stroking and patting their necks and legs with affection.

According to this Tafsīr, the word: عَن ('*an*: from or because) in: عَنْ ذِكْرِ رَبِّي ('*an dhikri-rabbī*: from or because of the remembrance of my Lord) is the 'an of cause' عَنْ سَبَبِيَّه ('an sababiyah), and the pronoun in: تَوَارَتْ (*tawarāt*: disappeared) is invariably reverting to horses, and: مَسْحٌ (*masḥ*) does not mean to cut, instead, it means to pass or wipe hands (over the body of the horses) with affection.

Classical commentators like Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Jarīr Ṭabarī, Imām Rāzī and others have preferred this very Tafsīr, because it is free from any possible doubt about property being wasted.

In terms of the words of the noble Qur'ān, there is room for both explanations. But, since a *marfu'* Ḥadīth has appeared in favor of the first Tafsīr, a Ḥadīth that is *ḥasan* (good) as regards its authority, therefore, it has become weightier and more acceptable.

The story of the return and resetting of the Sun

Some early interpreters have, while following the first Tafsīr, also said that soon after having missed the Ṣalāh of al-'Aṣr, Sayyidnā Sulaymān عليه السلام prayed to Allah Ta'ālā, or requested the angels, that the Sun should be made to return. Accordingly, the Sun was returned and he was enabled to perform his appointed Ṣalāh. After that, the Sun set once again. These people take the pronoun in: رُدُّوهَا (*rudduhā*: Bring it back to me - 38:33) as reverting to the Sun.

But, investigative commentators, for instance, 'Allāmah 'Ālūsī and others have rejected this fictional approach, and have said that the pronoun in: رُدُّوهَا (*rudduhā*: Bring them back to me) is reverting to 'horses' and not to the Sun - not because, refuge with Allah, making the Sun to return is not within the power and control of Allah Ta'ālā, but because this story does not stand proved from the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth. (Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī)

In the event one neglects the remembrance of Allah, some self-imposed penalty is in order as part of one's remorse

Anyway, this much does stand proved from the event that, should there come a time when one happens to have been neglectful of the remembrance of Allah, then, in order to punish one's aberrant self, depriving it of some lawful thing is permissible. This, in the terminology of the noble Ṣūfīs, is called: غیرت (*ghayrah*: sense of honor or shame).

(Bayān-ul-Qur'ān)

Imposing such penalties on one's own self for the purpose of training it to do what is good is a prescription of self-reform - and this event seems to suggest its justification, in fact, recommendation. It has also been reported from the Holy Prophet ﷺ that, on a certain occasion, Sayyidnā Abū Jahm رضي الله عنه presented to him the gift of a Syrian throw-over shawl having some sort of design embroidered or painted on it. He made his Ṣalāh covering himself with this shawl. Then, he came to Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضی اللہ عنہا and said to her, "Return this shawl to Abū Jahm, because I happened to have cast a look at the design it had during the course of my Ṣalāh, and this design would have almost thrown me into some trial" (Aḥkām-ul- Qur'ān with reference to al-Muwaṭṭa' of Imām Mālik).

Similarly, there is an incident related to Sayyidnā Abū Ṭalḥah رضي الله عنه. Once, while making Ṣalāh in his fruit-farm, he happened to have turned his attention to look at a bird, and as a result, his attention was diverted away from the Ṣalāh (a contravention of the essential etiquette of Ṣalāh being offered before Allah Ta'ālā). After that, he gave the whole farm as sadaqah (charity).

But one has to bear in mind that the penalty thought of for this purpose should be permissible by itself. Wasting away some property for no valid reason is not permissible. Therefore, no such action is correct as would result in the wastage of property. Among the Ṣūfīs, the famous Shibli رحمہ اللہ تعالی had once burnt his clothes as part of this kind of self-imposed penalty. But, the more discerning among Ṣūfīs, such as Shaikh 'Abdul-Wahhāb Sha'rānī رحمہ اللہ تعالی, did not approve of that action of his as correct and sound. (Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī)

The ruler should personally keep watching over the functions of the state

The second line of conduct that emerges from this event is that the person responsible for the affairs of the state or its high officials (who share this responsibility with him) should personally keep watching over their subordinate departments in a way that they never sit relaxed after having passed on the trust to their deputies and assistants. This is the reason why Sayyidnā Sulaymān عليه السلام who had a host of subordinates at his command, inspected the horses in person. This concern (to be

personally vigilant against any malfunction of the state system) stands proved also from the examples set by the rightly guided caliphs of Islam, particularly from the practice of Sayyidnā 'Umar ﷺ.

At the time of one act of *'ibādah* (worship), engaging in another is an error

The second line of conduct that stands proved from this event is that the time of an *'ibādah* that is already bound with a certain hour should not be spent in getting busy with some other act of *'ibādah*. It is obvious that the inspection of horses prepared for Jihad amounted to a significant act of worship in its own right. But, as this was not the time for this kind of *'ibādah*, rather, was the time of the prescribed *'ibādah* of Ṣalāh, therefore, Sayyidnā Sulaymān ﷺ counted this too as an error, for which he made amends. Hence, Muslim jurists say that the way it is not permissible to stay occupied with buying and selling activity after the *adhan* (call for prayer) of Jumu'ah Ṣalāh, similarly, it is also not correct to stay occupied with some chore other than the preparation for the Jumu'ah Ṣalāh, even if it happens to be the *'ibādah* of reciting the Qur'ān or making *nafl ṣalāh*.

Verse 34

وَلَقَدْ فَتَنَّا سُلَيْمٰنَ وَاَلْقَيْنَا عَلٰى كُرْسِيِّهٖ جَسَدًا ثُمَّ اَنَابَ ﴿٣٤﴾

And We, indeed, tested Sulaymān while We threw on his throne a body after which he turned (to Us). [34]

Commentary

In this verse, Allah Ta'ālā has mentioned yet another test of Sayyidnā Sulaymān ﷺ with a simple statement saying that, during this test, some body, or part of it, was put on the throne of Sayyidnā Sulaymān ﷺ. As for what that body was and what its placement on the throne means and how it was a test, these details are not available in the noble Qur'ān, nor are they proved from any Ṣaḥīḥ Ḥadīth. Therefore, some authentic commentators, for instance, Ibn Kathīr seems to incline to the approach that anything the Qur'ān has left ambiguous should be left as is, without having to dig into its details. One should simply believe this much that Allah Ta'ālā had put Sayyidnā Sulaymān ﷺ to some test after which he turned to Allah more than before - and the real purpose of

the Qur'ān stands accomplished by saying that which has already been said.

Still, some commentators have tried to go after the details of this test, and have come up with several probabilities in this connection. Some of these probabilities happen to have been extracted exclusively from Judaic narrations. For example, the story that secret of the power of Sayyidnā Sulaymān عليه السلام was in his ring. On a certain day, the Satan got hold of his ring, and ended up sitting on the throne of Sayyidnā Sulaymān عليه السلام as the ruler looking like him. Forty days later, that ring of Sayyidnā Sulaymān عليه السلام was retrieved from the belly of a fish. After that, he regained his authority as the ruler once again. This narrative annexed with additional tales appears in several books of Tafsīr. But, Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Kathīr, after identifying all such narratives as Judaic reports, writes in his Tafsīr:

> "There is a group among the people of the Book that does not believe in Sayyidnā Sulaymān عليه السلام as a prophet. Therefore, it is obvious, all these false tales have been forged by them" - Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr, p. 36, v. 4.

Hence, labeling narratives of this nature as being the Tafsīr of this Qur'ānic verse is not correct by any standard.

There is another event relating to Sayyidnā Sulaymān عليه السلام that finds mention in the Ṣaḥīḥ of al-Bukhārī and elsewhere too. Finding some parts of this event resembling the text of this verse, some commentators have declared it to be the Tafsīr of this verse. The gist of the event is that once Sayyidnā Sulaymān عليه السلام confided as to when he would go to his wives, each of them would give birth to a boy who will carry out Jihād in the way of Allah. But, while verbalizing his thought, he forgot to say: *Insha'Allah* (If Allah wills) Allah Ta'ālā did not like this slip coming from his great prophet, and He proved this claim of his as false as only one out of all his wives gave birth to a still child that had one side missing.

Some commentators have applied the anatomy of this event on this verse, and have said that the expression: 'threw or put the body or its part on the throne' means that some attendant of Sayyidnā Sulaymān عليه السلام brought this body of the baby, and put it on the throne. Thereupon, Sayyidnā Sulaymān got alerted, and he realized that it was the

consequence of not saying: *Insha'Allah* on his part. Accordingly, he turned to Allah and sought forgiveness for this slip.

Discerning commentators like Qāḍī Abū-s-Sa'ūd, 'Allāmah 'Ālūsī and others have followed this Tafsīr. Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānavi has also gone by it in his Tafsīr Bayān-ul-Qur'ān. But, the reality is that even this event cannot be called the Tafsīr of this verse in a certain manner for the reason that no Ḥadīth narration that mentions this event has any indication that the Holy Prophet ﷺ has ever mentioned it as part of his explanation of the verse under study. Even Imām Bukhari has reported this Ḥadīth in his Kitāb-ul-Jihād, Kitāb-ul-Anbiyā', Kitāb-ul-Aymān wā-n-Nudhūr and elsewhere with various versions, but he has not mentioned it under the head of the Tafsīr of Sūrah Ṣād anywhere in his Kitābu-t-Tafsīr. In fact, he has reported another narration under the verse: وَهَبْ لِي مُلْكًا (bless me with a kingdom - 38:35) (which follows immediately next to the verse under discussion here) and has not made any mention of this Ḥadīth. This shows that, even in the sight of Imām Bukhārī, this particular event is not a Tafsīr of the verse under study. Instead, this too, like the several other events relating to the noble prophets described by the Holy Prophet ﷺ, is a separate event that does not necessarily have to be the Tafsīr of one or the other verse.

A third Tafsīr is credited to Imām Rāzī and some others. According to this Tafsīr, once Sayyidnā Sulaymān عليه السلام became very sick. He grew so weak because of it that, at the time he was brought in to sit on the throne, he gave the impression of a body without the soul. Later, Allah Ta'ālā enabled him to get well. At that time, he turned to Allah, expressed his gratitude before Him, sought His forgiveness - and along with all that, also prayed for an unmatched kingdom for himself in the future.

But, this Tafsīr too is simply conjectural. It also does not carry much congruence with the words of the noble Qur'ān, and there is no proof for it from any Ḥadīth narration as well.

The reality is that there is no source with us to find out the certain details of the event alluded to in the verse under study - nor are we duty-bound to go about finding it. Therefore, we have zero in our faith on this much that Allah Ta'ālā had put Sayyidnā Sulaymān عليه السلام to a certain test after which his passion to return to Allah came out stronger than ever

before - and that the real purpose of the Qur'ān in mentioning this event is to invite all human beings to turn to Allah like Sayyidnā Sulaymān عليه السلام as and when they face any distress or trial. As for the details of the test and trial of Sayyidnā Sulaymān عليه السلام, let these be entrusted with Allah. Allah knows best.

Verses 35 - 40

قَالَ رَبِّ اغْفِرْلِيْ وَهَبْ لِيْ مُلْكًا لَّا يَنْۢبَغِيْ لِاَحَدٍ مِّنْۢ بَعْدِيْ ۚ اِنَّكَ
اَنْتَ الْوَهَّابُ ﴿۳۵﴾ فَسَخَّرْنَا لَهُ الرِّيْحَ تَجْرِيْ بِاَمْرِهٖ رُخَآءً حَيْثُ
اَصَابَ ﴿۳۶﴾ وَالشَّيٰطِيْنَ كُلَّ بَنَّآءٍ وَّغَوَّاصٍ ﴿۳۷﴾ وَّاٰخَرِيْنَ مُقَرَّنِيْنَ
فِي الْاَصْفَادِ ﴿۳۸﴾ هٰذَا عَطَآؤُنَا فَامْنُنْ اَوْ اَمْسِكْ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ
﴿۳۹﴾ وَاِنَّ لَهٗ عِنْدَنَا لَزُلْفٰى وَحُسْنَ مَاٰبٍ ﴿۴۰﴾

He said, "O my Lord, forgive me, and bless me with a kingdom that will not be available to anyone after me. Surely, You are the Bountiful. [35] **Then We subjugated the wind for him that blew smoothly on his command to wherever he wished,** [36] **and (We subjugated to him) the satans (among Jinns), all builders and divers,** [37] **and many others held in chains.** [38] **This is Our gift. So, do favor (to someone) or withhold (it), with no (requirement to give) account.** [39] **He has a place of nearness in Our presence, and an excellent end.** [40]

Commentary

It was said in verse 35: هَبْ لِيْ مُلْكًا لَّا يَنْۢبَغِيْ لِاَحَدٍ مِّنْۢ بَعْدِيْ (bless me with a kingdom that will not be available to anyone after me.). Some commentators explain the sense of this prayer as 'let not a great kingdom like mine belong to anyone else during my time.' In other words, they take *"min ba'dī"*: or 'after me' in the sense of 'other than me.' Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānavi has done his translation accordingly. But, with most commentators, the sense of the prayer is: 'Even after me, let no one have a kingdom as great as this.' Accordingly, so it happened. The kingdom that Allah Ta'ālā gave to Sayyidnā Sulaymān عليه السلام was a kingdom the like of which never became the lot of anyone else. The reason was simple. The subjugation of the wind and the command over the genre of the Jinn

were exclusive traits of his kingdom, and no kingdom that followed him had these characteristics. There are some people who carry out mysterious exercises (*'amaliyyāt*) through which they are known to subjugate Jinns, a phenomenon that does not fall contrary to this, because it cannot be compared, in the least, to the subjugation of the jinn Allah had allowed for Sayyidnā Sulaymān عليه السلام. Moreover, these experts in *'amaliyyāt* are able to make just about one or a few Jinns become obedient to them, but the kind of wide spread kingdom that Sayyidnā Sulaymān عليه السلام had was not acquired by anyone.

Praying for office and power

At this place, it should be borne in mind that no prayer made by the noble prophets is made without the will and permission of Allah Ta'ālā. Sayyidnā Sulaymān عليه السلام had made this prayer too by the will and permission of Allah Ta'ālā. And since some bland seeking of power was not his aim, rather the driving desire to implement Divine laws and the passion to make truth triumph was behind it - and Allah Ta'ālā knew that once Sayyidnā Sulaymān عليه السلام had the power, he would work for these very high objectives, and would never entertain negative feelings of office, power and recognition - therefore, he was given the permission to make this prayer, and it was accepted as well. But, common people have been prohibited in Ḥadīth from seeking power following their own initiative. The reason is that such an initiative usually gets to be tainted with the desire for power, influence, money and property. Accordingly, where one has the certitude of being free of such selfish desires and one really would love to see the banner of truth fly high without the least hunger for power hidden anywhere in the recesses of his heart - then, for such a person, praying for power and authority of government is permissible. (Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī etc.)

In verse 38, it was said: مُقَرَّنِينَ فِى الْأَصْفَادِ (held in chains). Details about the subjugation of Jinns and the services they performed have appeared earlier in the commentary on Sūrah Saba' within this Volume VII. Here, it has been said that Sayyidnā Sulaymān عليه السلام was holding the unruly Jinns by having them chained. Now, it is not necessary that these chains be the visible chains of iron. It is possible that there could have been some other method used to tie them up more tightly or securely - and it has been expressed as 'chains' for the sake of common comprehension.

Verses 41 - 44

وَاذْكُرْ عَبْدَنَآ اَيُّوْبَ ۘ اِذْنَادٰى رَبَّهٗٓ اَنِّىْ مَسَّنِىَ الشَّيْطٰنُ بِنُصْبٍ
وَّعَذَابٍ ﴿٤١﴾ اُرْكُضْ بِرِجْلِكَ ۚ هٰذَا مُغْتَسَلٌ ۢ بَارِدٌ وَّشَرَابٌ ﴿٤٢﴾
وَوَهَبْنَا لَهٗٓ اَهْلَهٗ وَمِثْلَهُمْ مَّعَهُمْ رَحْمَةً مِّنَّا وَذِكْرٰى لِاُولِى الْاَلْبَابِ
﴿٤٣﴾ وَخُذْ بِيَدِكَ ضِغْثًا فَاضْرِبْ بِّهٖ وَلَا تَحْنَثْ ۗ اِنَّا وَجَدْنٰهُ صَابِرًا ۗ
نِعْمَ الْعَبْدُ ۗ اِنَّهٗٓ اَوَّابٌ ﴿٤٤﴾

And remember Our slave, Ayyūb (Job) - when he called his Lord, "The Shaiṭān (Satan) has inflicted weariness and pain upon me." [41] (Allah said to him,) "Strike (the ground) with your foot: Here is a cool water to bathe, and a drink!" [42] And We let him have his family and the like of them besides, as a mercy from Us, and a reminder for the people of understanding. [43] And (We said to him,) "Take (a bundle of) thin twigs in your hand, and strike with it, and do not violate your oath. Surely, We found him very enduring. He was really an excellent slave. Surely, he was great in turning (to Us, in penitence and praise). [44]

Commentary

The event relating to Sayyidnā Ayyūb عليه السلام has been introduced here to comfort and prompt the Holy Prophet ﷺ, so that he would also observe patience. This event has appeared with details in our commentary on Sūrah Al-Anbiyā' (Ma'āriful-Qur'ān, Volume V1). A few significant notes are being added here.

In the opening verse (41), it was said: مَسَّنِىَ الشَّيْطٰنُ بِنُصْبٍ وَّعَذَابٍ (The Shaiṭān has inflicted weariness and pain upon me). Some early commentators have given details as to how the Shaiṭān had caused this affliction and pain. They say that the disease from which Sayyidnā Ayyūb عليه السلام suffered had overtaken him under the influence of the Shaiṭān. What happened was that once the angels praised Sayyidnā Ayyūb عليه السلام in a manner that made the Shaiṭān envy him. He prayed to Allah Ta'ālā that he be given such control over his body, wealth and children that allowed him to do whatever he liked with him. Allah Ta'ālā too intended to test Sayyidnā Ayyūb عليه السلام, therefore, the Shaiṭān was

given this right, and he made him suffer from this disease.

But, discerning commentators have refuted this story by saying that, in terms of the clear statement of the noble Qur'ān, the Shaiṭān cannot gain control over the blessed prophets, therefore, it is not possible that he could have made him suffer from this disease.

Some others have explained the Shaiṭān having afflicted pain by saying that the Shaiṭān used to plant all sorts of scruples in the heart of Sayyidnā Ayyūb عليه السلام, while he was very sick which hurt him all the more. This is what he has mentioned here. But, the best explanation of this verse is what Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānavi has given in Bayān-ul-Qur'ān. This is being reproduced here from the Khulāsa-e-Tafsīr in Ma'āriful-Qur'ān:

'This affliction and pain, according to the saying of some commentators, is what Imām Aḥmad has reported from Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه in his Kitābu-z-zuhd, in which it has been stated that the Shaiṭān had once met the wife of Sayyidnā Ayyūb عليه السلام in the guise of a physician during the days of his sickness. Since he had posed himself as a physician, she requested him to treat her husband. He agreed subject to the condition that once he got cured, she would tell him that she was the one who cured him, and assured her that he wanted no more in return. She mentioned this to Sayyidnā Ayyūb عليه السلام. He said, "O my simple wife, he was the Shaiṭān. Now, I solemnly resolve that, should Allah Ta'ālā make me get well again, I am going to beat you with one hundred sticks of branches.' So, he was particularly shocked that Shaiṭān had become so high-handed that he wanted to make his own wife say words that evidently amount to shirk, though they may not prove to be so if subjected to interpretation. Though, Sayyidnā Ayyūb عليه السلام had made prayers for the removal of his affliction earlier as well, yet after this incident, he turned back to Him in plaint and prayer more fervently, and his prayer was answered: (Reported by Aḥmad).

The nature of the ailment of Sayyidnā Ayyūb عليه السلام

The Qur'ān tells us only this much that Sayyidnā Ayyūb عليه السلام was afflicted with a serious disease, but nothing was said about the nature of this disease. Even in Aḥadīth, no details about it have been reported from the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Nevertheless, from some reports attributed to the

Ṣaḥābah, it appears that blisters had erupted all over his body, and people had put him off on a dirt-heap out of nausea. But, some discerning commentators have refused to accept these attributed reports as correct. They say that diseases can afflict the blessed prophets, but they are not made to suffer from such diseases as would make people nauseated with it. Hence, this sort of disease cannot be attributed to Sayyidnā Ayyūb عليه السلام. Instead, they say, it was some common disease. Therefore, reports in which blisters have been attributed to Sayyidnā Ayyūb عليه السلام or in which it has been said that he was put off on a dirt-heap are not trustworthy, neither in terms of the authenticity of the report, nor rationally (abridged from Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī and Aḥkām-ul-Qur'ān).

In verse 44, it was said: خُذْ بِيَدِكَ ضِغْثًا (Take [a bundle of] thin twigs in your hand). This was said in the background when Sayyidnā Ayyūb عليه السلام intended to fulfill the oath he had taken. But, as his wife had taken good care of him, and had done nothing to deserve being chastised (with one hundred strokes of some stick as sworn by him), Allah Ta'ālā, in His mercy, showed him the way-out as to how he could do it symbolically and still fulfill his oath (as in khulasa-e-Tafsīr of Bayān-ul-Qur'ān).

Some issues relating to legal aspects of this event are being identified here.

Firstly: This event tells us that, should someone declare on oath that he or she would punish someone else to a count of one hundred strokes (using a small, thin, dry branch as beating stick) and then, rather applying one hundred strokes separately, he makes a bundle of all these branches and applies a single strike with it, the oath stands fulfilled. This was the reason why Sayyidnā Ayyūb عليه السلام was asked to do so. This is also the ruling given by Imām Abū Ḥanīfah. But, as says 'Allāmah Ibn-ul-Humām, it is subject to two essential conditions: Firstly, each stick must have made contact with the body of the particular person length-wise or width-wise. Secondly, it should have caused at least some pain. If the strokes were so light that they caused no pain, the oath will not be fulfilled. When Maulānā Thānavi said in Tafsīr Bayān-ul-Qur'ān that the oath will not be fulfilled, he probably meant thereby the same thing, that is, if there is no pain at all, or one of the sticks fails to make contact with the body, the oath will not be fulfilled. Otherwise, Hanafi jurists have clearly said that, should the striking be accomplished subject

to these two conditions, the oath is fulfilled. (Please see Fatḥ-ul-Qadīr, p. 137, v. 4).

The Islamic Legal Status of Stratagems

Secondly: From this verse, we also learn that in order to sidetrack and remain unaffected by something inappropriate or reprehensible, should some legal stratagem be opted for, then, it becomes permissible (known as *sharʻī ḥilah* [plural: *ḥiyāl*] as admissible in the Sharīʻah of Islam). It is obvious that the essential requisite of the oath in this event of Sayyidnā Ayyūb عليه السلام was that he should subject his blessed wife to full one hundred strokes to vacate his oath. But, his wife was innocent. She had taken remarkably good care of Sayyidnā Ayyūb عليه السلام during the days of his suffering. Therefore, Allah Taʻālā Himself prompted Sayyidnā Ayyūb عليه السلام to take to a via media, a *ḥilah* or smart escape route (from his predicament), and also made it clear to him that his oath will not stand broken thereby. Therefore, this event provides an argument in favor of the justification of the device of *ḥilāh*.

But, one should remember that such hiyal or stratagems become permissible only when they have not been reduced to an excuse for nullifying the objectives of the Sharīʻah. And if the purpose of such *ḥilah* is to nullify the right of some genuine holder of right, or to make what is openly haram become halal for one's own person while the spirit of the prohibited act has been retained intact, then, such a *ḥilah* is absolutely impermissible. For instance, there are people who make a hilah to avoid having to pay Zakāh. Just before the end of the year, they would pass on their wealth and property into the ownership of their wives. After some time, the wife passes it on into the ownership of her husband. And when the next year is about to close, the husband gifts it to the wife. This way no one remains obligated with the payment of Zakāh. Since, doing something like this is an effort to nullify the objectives of the Sharīʻah, therefore, it is *ḥarām* (unlawful) - and perhaps, the curse of this stratagem might as well be more punishing than the curse that would fall as a result of the abandonment of Zakāh. (Rūḥ-ul-Maʻānī from al-Mabsut of Sarakhsi)

Resorting to an oath to do what is inappropriate

The third ruling that we come to know from this verse is: If someone utters an oath to do an act that is inappropriate or wrong or impermissible, the oath stands effectively concluded, and should it be

broken, one will have to make amends and pay *kaffārah* (expiation). It is evident enough that, should there have been no kaffarah becoming due in that situation, Sayyidnā Ayyūb ﷺ would have not been asked to take to that hilah. But, along with it, one should also bear in mind that in the event one happens to have uttered an oath to do something inappropriate, then, the law of the Sharī'ah is that the oath should be broken, and *kaffārah* should be paid. In a Ḥadīth, the Holy Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said:

> "A person who utters an oath, then he decides that doing otherwise is better, then he should invariably do what is better - and pay *kaffārah* for his oath."

Verses 45 - 64

وَاذْكُرْ عِبٰدَنَآ اِبْرٰهِيْمَ وَاِسْحٰقَ وَيَعْقُوْبَ اُولِي الْاَيْدِيْ وَالْاَبْصَارِ
﴿٤٥﴾ اِنَّآ اَخْلَصْنٰهُمْ بِخَالِصَةٍ ذِكْرَى الدَّارِ ﴿٤٦﴾ وَاِنَّهُمْ عِنْدَنَا لَمِنَ
الْمُصْطَفَيْنَ الْاَخْيَارِ ﴿٤٧﴾ وَاذْكُرْ اِسْمٰعِيْلَ وَالْيَسَعَ وَذَا الْكِفْلِ
وَكُلٌّ مِّنَ الْاَخْيَارِ ﴿٤٨﴾ هٰذَا ذِكْرٌ وَاِنَّ لِلْمُتَّقِيْنَ لَحُسْنَ مَاٰبٍ
﴿٤٩﴾ جَنّٰتِ عَدْنٍ مُّفَتَّحَةً لَّهُمُ الْاَبْوَابُ ﴿٥٠﴾ مُتَّكِـِٕيْنَ فِيْهَا يَدْعُوْنَ
فِيْهَا بِفَاكِهَةٍ كَثِيْرَةٍ وَّشَرَابٍ ﴿٥١﴾ وَعِنْدَهُمْ قٰصِرٰتُ الطَّرْفِ اَتْرَابٌ
﴿٥٢﴾ هٰذَا مَا تُوْعَدُوْنَ لِيَوْمِ الْحِسَابِ ﴿٥٣﴾ اِنَّ هٰذَا لَرِزْقُنَا مَا لَهٗ مِنْ
نَّفَادٍ ﴿٥٤﴾ هٰذَا وَاِنَّ لِلطّٰغِيْنَ لَشَرَّ مَاٰبٍ ﴿٥٥﴾ جَهَنَّمَ يَصْلَوْنَهَا
فَبِئْسَ الْمِهَادُ ﴿٥٦﴾ هٰذَا فَلْيَذُوْقُوْهُ حَمِيْمٌ وَّغَسَّاقٌ ﴿٥٧﴾ وَّاٰخَرُ مِنْ
شَكْلِهٖٓ اَزْوَاجٌ ﴿٥٨﴾ هٰذَا فَوْجٌ مُّقْتَحِمٌ مَّعَكُمْ لَا مَرْحَبًا بِهِمْ اِنَّهُمْ
صَالُوا النَّارِ ﴿٥٩﴾ قَالُوْا بَلْ اَنْتُمْ لَا مَرْحَبًا بِكُمْ اَنْتُمْ قَدَّمْتُمُوْهُ لَنَا
فَبِئْسَ الْقَرَارُ ﴿٦٠﴾ قَالُوْا رَبَّنَا مَنْ قَدَّمَ لَنَا هٰذَا فَزِدْهُ عَذَابًا ضِعْفًا فِي
النَّارِ ﴿٦١﴾ وَقَالُوْا مَا لَنَا لَا نَرٰى رِجَالًا كُنَّا نَعُدُّهُمْ مِّنَ الْاَشْرَارِ ﴿٦٢﴾
اَتَّخَذْنٰهُمْ سِخْرِيًّا اَمْ زَاغَتْ عَنْهُمُ الْاَبْصَارُ ﴿٦٣﴾ اِنَّ ذٰلِكَ لَحَقٌّ

تَخَاصُمُ اَهْلِ النَّارِ ﴿٦٤﴾

And remember Our servants - Ibrāhīm and Isḥāq and Ya'qub - men of strength and men of vision. [45] We chose them for a trait of remembering the (eternal) Home (in the Hereafter). [46] And surely they are, in Our sight, among the the chosen, the best of the righteous. [47] And remember Isma'il and al-Yasa' and Dhul-Kifl. Each of them was among the best of the righteous. [48] This is a reminder (of what has passed). And surely the God-fearing will have the best place to return: [49]- everlasting gardens, with (their) doors opened for them. [50] They will be relaxing therein, calling there for plenteous fruits and drinks; [51] and in their company there will be females restricting their glances (to their husbands, and) of matching ages. [52] This is what you are being promised for the Day of Reckoning. [53] Surely, that is provision provided by Us to which there is no end. [54] Having said this, the transgressors will surely have the most evil place to return: [55] the Jahannam, in which they will enter. So, how evil is that place to rest? [56] Let them taste this: hot water and pus, [57] and other things similar to it of various kinds. [58] (When the leaders of the infidels will see their followers entering the hell after them, they will say to each other,) "This is a multitude rushing in (the hell) with you - they are not welcome - they are to burn in the Fire." [59] They (the followers) will say (to their leaders) "No, it is you - you are not welcome - you are the ones who brought this upon us." So, how evil is the place to stay (for ever)! [60] They (the followers) will say, "Our Lord, whoever has brought this on us, do increase his punishment twofold in the Fire." [61] And they (the infidels) will say, "What is the matter with us that we do not see those men whom we used to count amongst the worst? (i.e the Muslims whom the infidels used to treat as the worst people among them) [62] Had we taken them as a laughing-stock (unjustly), or have our eyes missed them?" [63] That is going to happen definitely, that is, the mutual quarrel of the people of the Fire. [64]

Commentary

The expression: أُولِى الْاَيْدِىْ وَالْاَبْصَارِ (translated as: men of strength and men of vision) literally means 'owners or possessors of hands and eyes.'

The sense is that they devoted their physical and intellectual energies in remaining obedient to Allah Ta'ālā. When this is said, a hint is being released to the fact that the real end use of human body parts is no other but that they are spent or utilized in obedience to the Divine commands, and the those parts of the body that are not utilized in it, their existence or non-existence remains equal.

Concern for 'Ākhirah is a distinct attribute of the noble prophets

The word 'home' in the statement: ذِكْرَى الدَّارِ (remembering the [eternal] Home [in the Hereafter]- 38:46) refers to the 'Ākhirah, (the Hereafter, the life-to-come). Instead of using the word: 'Ākhirah, the text has used the word: اَلدَّارِ (ad-dar: home) whereby it has warned human beings that they must take 'Ākhirah as their real Home, and make the concern for it the basis for whatever they think and do. Right from here, we also come to know that the concern for 'Ākhirah further sharpens and furbishes one's intellectual and physical faculties (helping it to flourish in an essentially true perspective). Hence, the view of some atheists that such concern blunts human faculties is baseless.

The Prophet : (al-Yasā': Elisha) عليه السلام

In verse 48, it was said: وَالْيَسَعَ (and [remember] al-Yasā'). Sayyidnā al-Yasā' عليه السلام is a prophet from among the prophets of Banī Isra'īl, peace be upon them all. He has been mentioned in the Qur'ān only at two places, once in Sūrah Al-An'ām and then, here in Sūrah Ṣād. No details have been mentioned at any of the two places, rather his name appears there as part of a list of the blessed prophets.

Historical chronicles report that he is a cousin of Sayyidnā Ilyās عليه السلام and was his deputy. He lived in his company and was made a prophet after him. Details about him appear in the Bible, the Book of Kings I, Chapter 19, and Kings II, Chapter 2, and elsewhere. There he has been mentioned by the name of اِلْيَشَعْ بن سافط (Elisha son of Sāfiṭ).

In verse 52, it was said: وَعِنْدَهُمْ قٰصِرَاتُ الطَّرْفِ اَتْرَابٌ (and in their company there will be females restricting their glances (to their husbands, and) of matching ages.). Meant by these are the Ḥūrs or Houris of Jannah (referred to, fondly enough for some people, even as 'nymphs of Paradise'). Being of matching ages could mean that they will be of the same age as among themselves. And it could also mean that they will be

of the same age as their spouses. In the first situation, if they were of the same age, the good thing about it would be that they would be relating to each other in mutual amity as friends, and not as 'the other woman' something very welcome for spouses.

Consideration of matching age between spouses is better

Then there is the other situation. If being of the same age is taken to mean that spouses will be of the same age, the good thing about it would be that there would be temperamental harmony between them, and they will have consideration for each other's preferences. This tells us that consideration should be made to keep ages of spouses matched, for it generates mutual love, and makes the relationship of marriage pleasant and permanent.

Verses 65 - 88

قُلْ اِنَّمَآ اَنَا مُنْذِرٌ وَّمَا مِنْ اِلٰهٍ اِلَّا اللّٰهُ الْوَاحِدُ الْقَهَّارُ ﴿٦٥﴾ رَبُّ
السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا الْعَزِيْزُ الْغَفَّارُ ﴿٦٦﴾ قُلْ هُوَ نَبَؤٌا
عَظِيْمٌ ﴿٦٧﴾ اَنْتُمْ عَنْهُ مُعْرِضُوْنَ ﴿٦٨﴾ مَا كَانَ لِيَ مِنْ عِلْمٍ بِالْمَلَاِ
الْاَعْلٰى اِذْ يَخْتَصِمُوْنَ ﴿٦٩﴾ اِنْ يُّوْحٰٓى اِلَيَّ اِلَّآ اَنَّمَآ اَنَا نَذِيْرٌ مُّبِيْنٌ
﴿٧٠﴾ اِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلٰٓئِكَةِ اِنِّيْ خَالِقٌ بَشَرًا مِّنْ طِيْنٍ ﴿٧١﴾ فَاِذَا
سَوَّيْتُهٗ وَنَفَخْتُ فِيْهِ مِنْ رُّوْحِيْ فَقَعُوْا لَهٗ سٰجِدِيْنَ ﴿٧٢﴾ فَسَجَدَ
الْمَلٰٓئِكَةُ كُلُّهُمْ اَجْمَعُوْنَ ﴿٧٣﴾ اِلَّآ اِبْلِيْسَ اِسْتَكْبَرَ وَكَانَ مِنَ
الْكٰفِرِيْنَ ﴿٧٤﴾ قَالَ يٰٓاِبْلِيْسُ مَامَنَعَكَ اَنْ تَسْجُدَ لِمَا خَلَقْتُ بِيَدَيَّ
اَسْتَكْبَرْتَ اَمْ كُنْتَ مِنَ الْعَالِيْنَ ﴿٧٥﴾ قَالَ اَنَا خَيْرٌ مِّنْهُ خَلَقْتَنِيْ
مِنْ نَّارٍ وَّخَلَقْتَهٗ مِنْ طِيْنٍ ﴿٧٦﴾ قَالَ فَاخْرُجْ مِنْهَا فَاِنَّكَ رَجِيْمٌ ﴿٧٧﴾
وَّاِنَّ عَلَيْكَ لَعْنَتِيْٓ اِلٰى يَوْمِ الدِّيْنِ ﴿٧٨﴾ قَالَ رَبِّ فَاَنْظِرْنِيْٓ اِلٰى يَوْمِ
يُبْعَثُوْنَ ﴿٧٩﴾ قَالَ فَاِنَّكَ مِنَ الْمُنْظَرِيْنَ ﴿٨٠﴾ اِلٰى يَوْمِ الْوَقْتِ

الْمَعْلُوْمِ ﴿٨١﴾ قَالَ فَبِعِزَّتِكَ لَأُغْوِيَنَّهُمْ اَجْمَعِيْنَ ﴿٨٢﴾ اِلَّا عِبَادَكَ
مِنْهُمُ الْمُخْلَصِيْنَ ﴿٨٣﴾ قَالَ فَالْحَقُّ وَالْحَقَّ اَقُوْلُ ﴿٨٤﴾ لَاَمْلَئَنَّ
جَهَنَّمَ مِنْكَ وَمِمَّنْ تَبِعَكَ مِنْهُمْ اَجْمَعِيْنَ ﴿٨٥﴾ قُلْ مَآ اَسْئَلُكُمْ
عَلَيْهِ مِنْ اَجْرٍ وَّمَآ اَنَا مِنَ الْمُتَكَلِّفِيْنَ ﴿٨٦﴾ اِنْ هُوَ اِلَّا ذِكْرٌ لِّلْعٰلَمِيْنَ
﴿٨٧﴾ وَلَتَعْلَمُنَّ نَبَاَهٗ بَعْدَ حِيْنٍ ﴿٨٨﴾

Say, " I am only a warner - and there is no god but Allah, the One, the All- Dominant, [65] the Lord of the heavens and the earth and what is between them, the Mighty, the Very-Forgiving." [66] Say, "It is a great news [67] to which you are averse. [68] I had no knowledge of the Heavenly Beings when they were debating (about the creation of 'Ādam).[1] [69] Revelation is sent to me only because I am a plain warner. [70][2]

When your Lord said to the angels, "I am going to create man from clay. [71] So, once I make him perfectly and breath My spirit into him, you fall down in prostration before him. [72] Then, the angels prostrated, all of them together - [73] except Iblis. He waxed proud, and became one of the disbelievers. [74] He (Allah) said, "O Iblis, what did prevent you from prostrating before what I created with My hands? Did you wax proud or were you among the lofty ones?" [75] He said, "I am better than him. You created me from fire, and created him from clay." [76] He said, "Then, get out from here, for you are accursed, [77] and on you shall remain My curse till the Day of Judgement." [78] He said, "O my Lord, then give me respite till the day they are raised again." [79] He said, "Then, you have been made one of those given respite, [80] until the Day of the Appointed Time." [81]

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(1). The reference here is to the conversation that took place between Allah Ta'ālā and His angels when He expressed His intention to create 'Ādam ﷺ, and which is being mentioned in verse 71 below.

(2). The sense is that I never knew about what Allah said to His angels when He intended to create 'Ādam ﷺ, nor was there any source of knowledge available to me other than the revelation from Allah. Now that I am narrating to you these events without having any other source of knowledge, it clearly proves that I am receiving revelation from Allah which has been sent to me only for the purpose that I warn you clearly about the evil fate of rejecting the truth.

He said, "Then, I swear by Your Might, that I will definitely lead them astray, all of them - [82] **except Your chosen servants among them."** [83] **He (Allah) said, "Then, the truth is-and it is (always) the truth that I speak---** [84] **that I will definitely fill the Jahannam with you and with those who will follow you from among them, all together."** [85]

Say, "I do not demand from you any fee for it, nor am I from among those who make up things artificially. [86] **It is nothing but an advice for all the worlds.** [87] **And you will come to know its reality after a while."** [88]

Commentary

A Gist of the Subjects of the Sūrah

In verse 65, it was said: قُلْ إِنَّمَا أَنَا مُنذِرٌ (Say, " I am only a warner)

At the beginning of the Sūrah, you have seen that the real objective of this Sūrah was the affirmation of the prophethood of the noble Prophet ﷺ a refutation of what the disbelievers said. In this connection, events relating to blessed prophets of the past were mentioned for two reasons. Firstly, that they bring comfort to the Holy Prophet ﷺ and that he too observes patience against the absurd allegations leveled by those who disbelieved - the same patience as observed by the blessed prophets before him. Secondly, that those who were denying the credentials of a true prophet should themselves learn their lesson through these events. After that, another method was used to invite the disbelievers to Islam. For this purpose, their attention was drawn to the good end of the believers, as opposed to the severe punishment awaiting disbelievers, while they were also warned that the people they were following were the ones who were prompting them to belie the true messenger of Allah, and the same people will refuse to help you in any way on the Day of Judgment, in fact, they would paint you black and you would curse them.

After a delineation of these subjects, the text has, in the concluding part, reverted to the main purpose, that is, it takes up the confirmation of prophethood of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. In this process, along with a presentation of necessary arguments, a compassionate invitation to believe has also been given.

In verse 69, it was said: مَا كَانَ لِيَ مِنْ عِلْمٍ بِالْمَلَإِ الْأَعْلَىٰ إِذْ يَخْتَصِمُونَ (I had no knowledge of the Heavenly Beings when they were debating (about the

creation of 'Ādam). Means: 'It is a clear proof of my prophethood that I am telling you these things from such a high assembly, things that cannot be found out through any medium other than wahy (revelation).' The words 'these things' refer to the conversation between Allah Taʻālā and the angels at the time of the creation of Sayyidnā 'Ādam عليه السلام and which finds mention in Sūrah Al-Baqarah where the angels had said: اَتَجْعَلُ فِيْهَا مَنْ يُّفْسِدُ فِيْهَا وَيَسْفِكُ الدِّمَآءَ (They said, "Will You create there one who will spread disorder on the earth and cause bloodsheds...? - 2:30). This conversation has been expressed here through the word: اختصام (*ikhtiṣām*) which literally means 'quarrel' or 'debate' - although, the angels never posed that question in terms of some objection or debate, instead, they wanted to find out the wise consideration behind the creation of Sayyidnā 'Ādam, عليه السلام but the outward pattern of the questions and answers had taken the form of some sort of a debate, therefore, it was alluded to as 'ikhtisam' or debate. This is similar to a younger person questioning an elder person, who refers to that question and answer, in a frank and casual manner, as a debate or quarrel.

In verse 71, it was said: اِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلٰٓئِكَةِ (When your Lord said to the angels...):

Mentioned here is the event of the creation of 'Ādam عليه السلام. Not only that it alludes to the conversation between Allah Taʻālā and the angels mentioned above, but also invites our attention towards the way Iblis had refused to prostrate himself before Sayyidnā 'Ādam عليه السلام just because of his envy and arrogance, very similarly, the Mushriks of Arabia were not willing to accept his advice because of their envy and arrogance - hence, they were going to meet the same fate as was met by Iblīs. (Tafsīr Kabir)

In verse 75, it was said: لِمَا خَلَقْتُ بِيَدَىَّ (what I created with My hands...):

Here, it is about Sayyidnā 'Ādam عليه السلام that Allah Taʻālā has said that it is He who had created him with His hands. There is a consensus among the majority of the Muslim Ummah that "hands" do not mean that Allah Taʻālā has hands as human being do. The reason is that Allah Taʻālā is absolutely pure and free from the need of body or its active limbs. Therefore, it means the power and control of Allah Taʻālā and that the word: يَدٌ (*yad*: hand) is commonly used in the Arabic language in the sense of power - for example, it was said: بِيَدِهٖ عُقْدَةُ النِّكَاحِ (in whose hand lies

the marriage tie - 2:237). Therefore, the verse means: 'I created 'Ādam with My power.' For that matter, everything in this universe owes its creation to nothing but Divine power. But, when Allah Ta'ālā intends to manifest the particular sublimity of something, He would specially attribute it to Himself, for instance, by such attribution the Ka'bah becomes Baytullah, the House of Allah; the she-camel of Sayyidnā Ṣāliḥ عليه السلام - ناقة الله *'nāqatullāh'*, the She-Camel of Allah; and Sayyidnā 'Īsā عليه السلام - *'kalīmatullah,'* 'the Word of Allah' or *'rūḥullāh,'* 'the Spirit of Allah.' Here too, this attribution has been introduced there to enhance the grace of Sayyidnā 'Ādam عليه السلام. (Qurṭubī)[1]

In verse 86, it was said: وَمَآ أَنَا مِنَ الْمُتَكَلِّفِيْنَ (nor am I from among those who make up things artificially.).

The blameworthiness of artificial behavior

The statement means: 'I am not declaring my prophethood artificially, nor am I falsely pretending to have knowledge and wisdom, rather, I am conveying the commandments of Allah to you as they are. From this we learn that feigned formality and pretension is blameworthy in the light of the Sharī'ah. Accordingly, there are some *aḥādīth* that condemn it. In the Ṣaḥīḥayn (al-Bukhārī and Muslim), it has been reported from Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd عليه السلام:

> "O people, whoever from among you knows something, let him tell people about it. But, that which he does not know, let him simply say: الله اعلم (Allah knows best) (because) Allah Ta'ālā has said about his Rasūl ﷺ: قُلْ مَآ أَسْئَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ أَجْرٍ وَّمَآ أَنَا مِنَ الْمُتَكَلِّفِيْنَ (Say, "I do not demand from you any fee for it, nor am I from among those who make up things artificially."- 38:86)." (Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī)

alḥamdulillāh
The Commentary on
Sūrah Ṣād

1. This interpretation is based on the line adopted by some theologians. The others are of the view that the word *'yad'* (hand) used for Allah does not refer to a limb like the hand of human beings. It is rather an attribute of Allah Ta'ālā, the exact nature of which is unknown. The third view is of some other elders who abstain from indulging in the interpretation of such expressions and prefer to keep silent about them, and leave their exact meaning to Allah Ta'ālā. Muhammad Taqi Usmani

Sūrah Az-zumar

(The Groups)

Sūrah Az-Zumar is Makkī, and it has 75 verses and 8 sections

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 6

تَنْزِيْلُ الْكِتٰبِ مِنَ اللّٰهِ الْعَزِيْزِ الْحَكِيْمِ ﴿١﴾ اِنَّآ اَنْزَلْنَآ اِلَيْكَ الْكِتٰبَ
بِالْحَقِّ فَاعْبُدِ اللّٰهَ مُخْلِصًا لَّهُ الدِّيْنَ ﴿٢﴾ اَلَا لِلّٰهِ الدِّيْنُ الْخَالِصُ ؕ
وَالَّذِيْنَ اتَّخَذُوْا مِنْ دُوْنِهٖٓ اَوْلِيَآءَ ۘ مَا نَعْبُدُهُمْ اِلَّا لِيُقَرِّبُوْنَآ اِلَى اللّٰهِ
زُلْفٰى ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ يَحْكُمُ بَيْنَهُمْ فِيْ مَا هُمْ فِيْهِ يَخْتَلِفُوْنَ ۬ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ
لَا يَهْدِيْ مَنْ هُوَ كٰذِبٌ كَفَّارٌ ﴿٣﴾ لَوْ اَرَادَ اللّٰهُ اَنْ يَّتَّخِذَ وَلَدًا
لَّاصْطَفٰى مِمَّا يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَآءُ ۙ سُبْحٰنَهٗ ؕ هُوَ اللّٰهُ الْوَاحِدُ الْقَهَّارُ ﴿٤﴾
خَلَقَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضَ بِالْحَقِّ ۚ يُكَوِّرُ الَّيْلَ عَلَى النَّهَارِ وَيُكَوِّرُ
النَّهَارَ عَلَى الَّيْلِ وَسَخَّرَ الشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ ؕ كُلٌّ يَّجْرِيْ لِاَجَلٍ
مُّسَمًّى ؕ اَلَا هُوَ الْعَزِيْزُ الْغَفَّارُ ﴿٥﴾ خَلَقَكُمْ مِّنْ نَّفْسٍ وَّاحِدَةٍ ثُمَّ
جَعَلَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا وَاَنْزَلَ لَكُمْ مِّنَ الْاَنْعَامِ ثَمٰنِيَةَ اَزْوَاجٍ ؕ يَخْلُقُكُمْ
فِيْ بُطُوْنِ اُمَّهٰتِكُمْ خَلْقًا مِّنْۢ بَعْدِ خَلْقٍ فِيْ ظُلُمٰتٍ ثَلٰثٍ ؕ ذٰلِكُمُ
اللّٰهُ رَبُّكُمْ لَهُ الْمُلْكُ ؕ لَآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا هُوَ ۚ فَاَنّٰى تُصْرَفُوْنَ ﴿٦﴾

This is the revelation of the Book from Allah, the Mighty, the Wise. [1] Surely We have revealed the Book to you with the truth; so worship Allah in submission to Him exclusively. [2] Remember, Allah alone deserves the exclusive submission. As for those who have taken to guardians other than Him (saying), "We worship them for no other reason than that they would bring us near to Allah closely." Allah will judge between them in the matters they had been differing in. Surely, Allah does not give guidance to anyone who is liar, highly infidel. [3] Had Allah opted to have a son of His own, He would have definitely chosen anyone, as He wished, out of what He had created. (But), Pure is He. He is Allah, the Only One, the All-Dominant [4] He created the heavens and the earth in His wisdom. He wraps the night over the day and He wraps the day over the night, and He has put the Sun and the Moon under His command, each one of them moving for an appointed term. Remember, He is the Mighty, the Most-Forgiving . [5] He created you from a single person, then (once this person was created,) He made from him his match, and sent down for you eight pairs of the cattle. He creates you in the wombs of your mothers, creation after creation, in three layers of darkness. That is your Allah, your Lord. To Him belongs the whole kingdom. There is no god but He. Then, to where are you being diverted? [6]

Commentary

In verse 2, it was said: فَاعْبُدِ اللّٰهَ مُخْلِصًا لَّهُ الدِّيْنَ اَلَا لِلّٰهِ الدِّيْنُ الْخَالِصُ (so worship Allah in submission to Him exclusively. Remember, Allah alone deserves the exclusive submission.). The word: دِيْن (*dīn*) at this place means worship, submission, devotion or obedience which is inclusive of adhering to all religious injunctions. In the first statement earlier to this, the address was to the Holy Prophet ﷺ where he was commanded to make the worship of and obedience to Allah sincere and exclusive for Him, so as there remains no trace of *shirk* or of any hypocrisy or false pretension. The second statement is to emphasize the first statement in that sincerity in worship is the exclusive right of Allah and no one else, other than Him deserves it.

It has been reported from Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah رضي الله عنه that someone submitted before the Holy Prophet ﷺ, 'Yā rasūlallāh, there are occasions when I give in charity or do a favor to somebody, but my intention gets

mixed up - I do look forward to seek the pleasure of Allah thereby, but I also hope that people will praise me for it.' The noble prophet of Allah ﷺ said, "By the One in whose hands lies the life of Muhammad, Allah Ta'ālā does not like anything in which someone or something else has been associated as a partner or sharer with Him. Then he recited the verse quoted here as the proof: اَلَا لِلّٰهِ الدِّيْنُ الْخَالِصُ (Remember, Allah alone deserves the exclusive submission.)". (Qurṭubī)

Acceptance of deeds with Allah depends on unalloyed measure of sincerity

Several verses of the Qur'ān bear out that the deeds are not measured with Allah by numbers, instead, they are measured by weight, for example: وَنَضَعُ الْمَوَازِيْنَ الْقِسْطَ لِيَوْمِ الْقِيٰمَةِ (and We shall place scales to do justice on the Day of Judgment - Al-Anbiyā', 21:47). This verse read in juxtaposition with the verses cited above tell us that the value and weight of deeds is judged by the amount of sincerity with which they are performed, and it goes without saying that perfect sincerity cannot be achieved without perfect faith, because perfect sincerity means that one should not take someone as having intrinsic power to benefit or harm someone other than Allah, nor take someone other than Allah as disposer of one's acts, nor allow the thought of someone other than Allah enter into any act of worship or obedience of his volition. As for non-voluntary scruples, Allah Ta'ālā forgives them.

The noble Sahabah are the front line of Muslims. Their practice of prayers and good deeds may not appear to be very prominent numerically. But, despite all this, the reason why the single insignificant most of their deeds was superior to the highest of the high deeds of the rest of the Ummah was no other but their very perfection of *'imān* (faith) and perfection of *ikhlāṣ* (sincerity).

The next sentence in verse 3 says: وَالَّذِيْنَ اتَّخَذُوْا مِنْ دُوْنِهٖٓ اَوْلِيَآءَ مَا نَعْبُدُهُمْ اِلَّا لِيُقَرِّبُوْنَآ اِلَى اللّٰهِ زُلْفٰى (As for those who have taken to guardians other than Him [saying], "We worship them for no other reason than that they would bring us near to Allah closely." - 39:3). This is a description of the creed of the Mushriks of Arabia. Even the common people among them during that period of time more or less had the same belief that Allah Ta'ālā is the creator, owner and master in all matters. But when the Shaiṭān (Satan) instigated them, they started making idols in the image of angels,

as they imagined they would be. They knew it well that these idols made by them had no consciousness, reason or power, yet they believed that by showing their reverence for these idols, those angels (in whose images these idols are designed) will be pleased with them, and the angels have nearness to Allah. They compared Allah's nearness with that of the worldly kings where a courtier who is pleased with someone could put in a good word for him with the king and have him included among his inner circle. So, they surmised that the angels too could recommend anyone they chose very much like the royal courtiers of their world. But, all these ideas they nursed were totally false, in fact, they were nothing but satanic deception. First of all, who can say whether or not these idols happen to be on the real form of the angels and, even if they were, one cannot expect angels close to Allah showing their pleasure over being worshipped by somebody on the earth. In fact, they temperamentally hate everything that Allah Ta'ālā does not like. In addition to that, angels cannot intercede on behalf of anyone before Allah on their own, unless they are allowed to make their intercession about a particular person. The verse of the Qur'ān: وَكَمْ مِّنْ مَّلَكٍ فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ لَاتُغْنِي شَفَاعَتُهُمْ شَيْئًا اِلَّا مِنْ بَعْدِ اَنْ يَّاْذَنَ اللّٰهُ لِمَنْ يَّشَآءُ وَيَرْضٰى (And how many angels there are in the heavens whose intercession cannot benefit (anyone) at all, but after Allah allows (it) for whomsoever He wills and pleases - An-Najm, 53:26) means exactly this.

Even the polytheists of that period were better than the disbelievers of today

Modern day materialistic disbelievers already deny the very existence of Allah Ta'ālā and would not demur when making audacious remarks against Him. Kufr or disbelief is now an imported stuff. Take the *kufr* that is imported from Europe. It may come in different colors and shades, like capitalism and communism. Yet, there is a common denominator. God forbid, they hold, nothing like God exists. We are masters of our destiny. There is no one to question us as to what we are doing. Terrible ingratitude indeed! As a consequence, peace has disappeared from the whole world. Ever-new gadgets of comfort proliferate, but real comfort remains missing. Advancements in health care have never been at a level they are today, but there is a matching abundance of diseases hitherto unheard of. Security arrangements, police, guards, surveillance abound, but the graph of crime keeps rising. This craze for new instrumentation and gadgetry and this relentless pursuit of pleasure and comfort through

state-of-the-art objects one is being pushed to live with are things, if someone cares to think about it, that have assumed the proportions of a curse for innocent human beings so fondly created by their Maker. As for the punishment of *kufr* in the Hereafter, it is, as due for all disbelievers, an everlasting stay in the Jahannam. But, one should not forget that this blind ingratitude could not go unaccounted for. The ungrateful person has to undergo some punishment for it within this world for the reason that the ungrateful person used the blessings of Allah even to ride the skies, yet failed to thank Him for it. How apt is the Persian quip: 'In the middle of the house, I forgot the master of the house!'

The first sentence of verse 4: لَوْ أَرَادَ اللّٰهُ اَنْ يَّتَّخِذَ وَلَدًا (Had Allah opted to have a son of His own) is a refutation of the allegation of those who said that angels were the progeny of Allah. The idea was false and absurd. Taking it on as a supposition of the impossible, it was said: If Allah Ta'ālā were to have, God forbid, any children, it goes without saying that it could not have happened without His intention and will, for it would have been impossible as children are not imposed on anyone - definitely not so in the case of Allah. Then, suppose He had the intention, in which case, everyone other than Him happens to have been created him, so He would have picked up one of them to be His progeny. Now, children have to be of the same genus as the father, and the created cannot be of the same genus as the creator, therefore, the intention to have progeny from the created becomes impossible.

In verse 5, it was said: يُكَوِّرُ الَّيْلَ عَلَى النَّهَارِ (He wraps the night over the day and He wraps the day over the night,). The word: تَكْوِيْر (*takwīr*) means to throw something on top of the other and thereby hide it. The Qur'ān has elected to express the phenomenon of the alternation of the night and day in terms of common perception - when night comes, it is as if a curtain has been thrown against the light of the day, and when the day comes, the darkness of the night goes behind the curtain.

Both the Moon and the Sun move

Later in verse 5, it was said: كُلٌّ يَّجْرِىْ لِاَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى (each one of them moving for an appointed term.) This tells us that both the Sun and the Moon move. Scientific researches in astronomy and geology are not the subject of the noble Qur'ān, or of any other scripture. But, it is obligatory to believe in whatever appears there as a corollary in this matter.

Scientific findings, old or new, keep changing all the time. Qur'ānic facts are changeless. Whatever the cited verse tells us - that the Sun and the Moon are both moving - believing in it is obligatory. Now, there remains the other matter - does the rising and setting of the Sun relate to the movement of the earth, or to the movement of these very planets? The Qur'ān neither confirms nor rejects it. Hence, there is no hitch in accepting what experience or experiment bears out.

In verse 6, it was said: وَاَنْزَلَ لَكُمْ مِّنَ الْاَنْعَامِ ثَمٰنِيَةَ اَزْوَاجٍ (and sent down for you eight pairs of the cattle.). The creation of the cattle has been expressed in this verse by saying that they have been 'sent down from the skies' whereby an indication has been given that a major factor in their creation is water that is sent down from sky. Therefore, it can be said that these too were as if sent down from the skies. The noble Qur'ān has used the same expression for human dress: اَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكُمْ لِبَاسًا (We have sent down to you clothing - Al-A'rāf, 7:26). Then, this word also appears in relation to some minerals, for instance, iron: وَاَنْزَلْنَا الْحَدِيْدَ (and We sent down iron - Al-Ḥadīd, 57:25). The purpose is to emphasize that these things were created through the intrinsic power of Allah Ta'ālā, and that they were given to human beings as His blessings. (Qurṭubī)

Towards the later part of verse 6, it was said: خَلْقًا مِّنْۢ بَعْدِ خَلْقٍ فِيْ ظُلُمٰتٍ ثَلٰثٍ (He creates you in the wombs of your mothers, creation after creation, in three layers of darkness.) Here, some clues to the mysteries of Divine power that work in the creation of man have been released. First of all, it was well within the power of Allah Ta'ālā that He could have made the infant come to be created whole and complete in the womb of the mother within a single instant. But, such was the dictate of wisdom and expedient consideration that it was not done. Instead, a process of gradualness was opted for as indicated by: خَلْقًا مِّنْۢ بَعْدِ خَلْقٍ (creation after creation). The purpose was to ensure that the woman in whose womb this 'mini universe' was taking shape should gradually become used to bearing its burden. Secondly, the creation of this matchless marvel of beauty and efficiency provided with hundreds of precision gadgets, hair-thin veins to carry life-blood and spiritual input was not to look like things created by common industrialists in spacious factories under glowing lights. Instead of that, this marvel of creation has reached its completion at a place shielded by three layers of darkness, a location so

hidden from sight that it beats all imagination. فَتَبَارَكَ اللّٰهُ اَحْسَنُ الْخَالِقِيْنَ (So glorious is Allah, the best of the Creators - Al-Mu'minūn, 23:14).

Verses 7 - 10

اِنْ تَكْفُرُوْا فَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ غَنِيٌّ عَنْكُمْ وَلَا يَرْضٰى لِعِبَادِهِ الْكُفْرَ وَاِنْ
تَشْكُرُوْا يَرْضَهُ لَكُمْ ط وَلَا تَزِرُ وَازِرَةٌ وِّزْرَ اُخْرٰى ط ثُمَّ اِلٰى رَبِّكُمْ
مَّرْجِعُكُمْ فَيُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُوْنَ ط اِنَّهٗ عَلِيْمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُوْرِ
﴿٧﴾ وَاِذَا مَسَّ الْاِنْسَانَ ضُرٌّ دَعَا رَبَّهٗ مُنِيْبًا اِلَيْهِ ثُمَّ اِذَا خَوَّلَهٗ نِعْمَةً
مِّنْهُ نَسِيَ مَا كَانَ يَدْعُوْٓا اِلَيْهِ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَجَعَلَ لِلّٰهِ اَنْدَادًا لِّيُضِلَّ عَنْ
سَبِيْلِهٖ ط قُلْ تَمَتَّعْ بِكُفْرِكَ قَلِيْلًا اِنَّكَ مِنْ اَصْحٰبِ النَّارِ ﴿٨﴾ اَمَّنْ
هُوَ قَانِتٌ اٰنَآءَ الَّيْلِ سَاجِدًا وَّقَآئِمًا يَّحْذَرُ الْاٰخِرَةَ وَيَرْجُوْا رَحْمَةَ
رَبِّهٖ ط قُلْ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الَّذِيْنَ يَعْلَمُوْنَ وَالَّذِيْنَ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ط اِنَّمَا
يَتَذَكَّرُ اُولُوا الْاَلْبَابِ ﴿٩﴾ قُلْ يٰعِبَادِ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوا اتَّقُوْا رَبَّكُمْ ط
لِلَّذِيْنَ اَحْسَنُوْا فِيْ هٰذِهِ الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةٌ ط وَاَرْضُ اللّٰهِ وَاسِعَةٌ ط اِنَّمَا
يُوَفَّى الصّٰبِرُوْنَ اَجْرَهُمْ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ ﴿١٠﴾

If you disbelieve, then, Allah does not need you at all, however He does not like for His servants to be disbelievers, and if you are grateful, He will like it for you. And no one will bear the burden of someone else. Then, to your Lord is your return, so He will tell you about what you used to do. He is aware of whatever lies in the hearts. [7] **And when man is afflicted by pain, he calls his Lord turning to Him passionately. Thereafter, when He blesses him with some favor from Him, he forgets that for which he was calling Him earlier, and sets up partners for Allah, so that he leads others astray from His way. Say, "Enjoy (the pleasure of) your disbelief for a while, (then) surely, you are from among the people of the Fire."** [8]

Can (such people be equal to) the one who worships during the hours of the night, prostrating and standing,

fearing the Hereafter and having hopes in his Lord's mercy? Say, "Can those who know and those who do not know become equal?" It is only the people of understanding who are receptive of the advice. [9] **Say (on My behalf) "O My servants who believe, fear your Lord. Those who do good in this world will have a good return, and the earth of Allah is wide. Certainly those who observe patience will be given their reward in full without measure.** [10]

Commentary

In the opening verse (7), it was said: اِنْ تَكْفُرُوْا فَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ غَنِيٌّ عَنْكُمْ (If you disbelieve, then, Allah does not need you at all,) that is, neither does your faith bring any benefit to Allah Ta'ālā, nor does your disbelief or ingratitude, any loss. According to a Ḥadīth in Ṣaḥīḥ of Muslim, Allah Ta'ālā said: "O My servants, even if the first and the last among you and the humans and the Jinns, all of them, were to fall in sin and disobedience, it does not affect My power and authority in the least." (Ibn Kathīr)

Next it was said: وَلَا يَرْضٰى لِعِبَادِهِ الْكُفْرَ (however He does not like for His servants to be disbelievers,) The word: رِضَاء (*riḍā*) means love, liking, pleasure, or to intend to do something without objection. Its antonym: سَخَط (*sakhaṭ*) means to detest something or take it to be objectionable - even if it is coupled with intention.

Ruling

Ahl-us-sunnah wa-l-Jama'ah believe that nothing good or bad, faith or disbelief can come into existence without the will and intention of Allah Ta'ālā. Therefore, for everything to come into existence, the intention of Allah Ta'ālā is a binding condition. However, the pleasure and favor of Allah Ta'ālā relates to *'imān* (faith) and good deeds only. Kufr (disbelief), Shirk (ascribing of partners to Allah) and acts of disobedience are things He does not like. Shaikh-ul-Islam Nawawi writes in his book, الاصُول وَالضّوَابِط *al-uṣul wa-d- ḍawabiṭ*:

مذهب اهل الحق الايمان بالقدر واثباته وان جميع الكائنات خيرها وشرها بقضاء الله وقدره وهو مريد لها كلها ويكره المعاصى مع انه تعالىٰ مريد لها لحكمة يعلمها جل وعلا. (روح المعانى)

The creed (*madhhab*) of people who follow the truth

(ahl-ul-haqq) is to believe in destiny (*al-qadr*) and that all existents, good or bad, come into existence under the decision (*qaḍā'*) and destination (*qadar*) of Allah Ta'ālā, and Allah Ta'ālā does make the intention to create these, but He dislikes acts of disobedience and sin - though, the intention of creating these materializes in view of some wise consideration which He alone knows in His most exalted majesty. (Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī)

In the first sentence of verse 9, it was said: اَمَّنْ هُوَ قَانِتٌ اٰنَآءَ الَّيْلِ (Can (such people be equal to) the one who worships during the hours of the night, prostrating and standing, fearing the Hereafter and having hopes in his Lord's mercy?). The first word: اَمَّنْ (*amman*) is a combination of two words: اَمْ (*am*: an interrogative particle) and: مَنْ (*man*: relative pronoun). Before this sentence, the disbelievers have told on behalf of Allah Ta'ālā that they can go ahead and enjoy the fruits of their disbelief and sin during this mortal life, but finally they are doomed to stoke the fire of Jahannam. After then, the present sentence takes up the description of an obedient believer that has been initiated with the question word of اَمَّنْ (*amman*). Scholars of exegesis have said that there is an ellipsis of a sentence that should have appeared earlier, that is, the disbeliever will be told, 'are you better, or is it the obedient believer who has been mentioned later?'. The word: قَانِتٌ (qanit) has been explained variously. That which comprehends all these meanings comes from Sayyidnā Ibn Mas'ūd رضي الله عنه. According to him, it means devotedly obedient, and when this word is used in conjunction with Ṣalāh, as in: قُوْمُوْا لِلّٰهِ قَانِتِيْنَ (Stand before Allah in total devotion - Al-Baqarah, 2:238), there it means the person who lowers his gaze in salah, does not see right and left, does not play with his body or clothes and does not voluntarily remember anything from his worldly life. Any incidence of forgetfulness or involuntary scruple would not be considered contrary to this. (Qurṭubī)

Immediately next in verse 9, it was said: اٰنَآءَ الَّيْلِ (during the hours of the night). The expression means hours of the night and denotes the early, the middle and the last part of the night. Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه said that, 'a person who wishes that Allah Ta'ālā would make the reckoning on the plains of Resurrection easy on him should so manage himself that Allah Ta'ālā finds him in the state of Sujud (prostration) and Qiyam (stance of standing) during the darkness of the night in an emotional condition in which he is concerned about his fate in the

Hereafter, yet is hoping for the mercy of Allah.' Some early commentators have identified the time between Maghrib and 'Isha' also as included in the expression: اناءَ الليل (*'ana'-ul-lail*). (Qurṭubī)

In verse 10, it was said: وَاَرْضُ اللّٰهِ وَاسِعَةٌ (and the earth of Allah is wide).In the sentence previous to this, Good deeds had been enjoined. This might prompt someone to come up with the excuse, 'The city or country in which I live, or the social milieu I am stuck with around me stops me from doing good deeds.' This sentence carries an answer to this excuse - 'if you find adherence to Islamic legal injunctions difficult while living in some particular country, city or social setup, then, leave it. The earth of Allah is wide enough. Go and live at a place and in a surrounding that is conducive to remaining obedient to Divine commandments.' This persuades one to migrate from a place living in which one cannot dutifully follow and observe what has been enjoined by his religion. Some rules relating to hijrah (emigration) have already appeared in the commentary on Sūrah An-Nisā' (Ma'āriful-Qur'ān, Volume II, Index p. 659, see under Hijrah).

In the last sentence of verse 10, it was said: اِنَّمَا يُوَفَّى الصّٰبِرُوْنَ اَجْرَهُمْ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ (Certainly those who observe patience will be given their reward in full without measure.) The expression: بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ (*bighayri-ḥisāb*: without measure) means that the reward of those who endure ordeals will not be given to them under some pre-determined calculations or measures, instead, it will be sans-calculation, sans-reckoning, in a spirit of generosity at its most sublime as mentioned in a Ḥadīth narration that follows. Some others have interpreted this expression in the sense of request, or claim, that is, in this worldly life, should someone have some right due on someone, he has to initiate the claim for it. But, with Allah, those who observe patience will be given their reward without any request or claim.

Qatādah reports from Sayyidnā Anas ﷺ that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said, 'On the Day of Judgment, a Scale of Justice will be set in place. When people who had given Sadaqah (charity) come forward, whatever they had given will be weighed, and they will be given their full reward against it. Similarly, the acts of worship such as Ṣalāh and Ḥajj will be weighed, and its reward would be duly given to those who had performed these. And when come those who had stood patient against trials and

tribulations, for them, there will be no measure and weight, instead, their return and reward will be rolled down towards them without calculation, measure or reckoning - because, Allah Ta'ālā has said: اِنَّمَا يُوَفَّى الصّٰبِرُوْنَ اَجْرَهُمْ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ (Certainly those who observe patience will be given their reward in full without measure. - 39:10). So much so that people who had lived their life of the mortal world in perfect peace and comfort would wish, 'alas! Had our bodies been shredded with scissors during our life in the mortal world, we too would have earned a similar return for our endurance and patience against trials.'

Imām Mālik رحمه الله تعالیٰ has taken: صابرين (*aṣ-ṣabirūn*) in this verse to mean people who endure hardships and remain patient over sorrows of the mortal life. Some elders have said that it means people who hold their self in check against acts of disobedience and sin. Qurṭubī says, 'when the word: صَابِر (*ṣābir*: patient) is uttered unaccompanied by some other word, it invariably means a person who observes patience against hardships caused during the process of making one's desiring self abstain from sins. And when the word: صَابِر (ṣābir) is used for a person who remains patient against distress, it is coupled with some other words: صَابِر عَلٰى كَذَا (one who is patient against such and such distress). والله اعلم Allah knows best.

Verses 11 - 20

قُلْ اِنِّیْٓ اُمِرْتُ اَنْ اَعْبُدَ اللّٰهَ مُخْلِصًا لَّهُ الدِّیْنَ ﴿١١﴾ وَ اُمِرْتُ لِاَنْ
اَكُوْنَ اَوَّلَ الْمُسْلِمِیْنَ ﴿١٢﴾ قُلْ اِنِّیْٓ اَخَافُ اِنْ عَصَیْتُ رَبِّیْ عَذَابَ
یَوْمٍ عَظِیْمٍ ﴿١٣﴾ قُلِ اللّٰهَ اَعْبُدُ مُخْلِصًا لَّهٗ دِیْنِیْ ﴿١٤﴾ فَاعْبُدُوْا
مَاشِئْتُمْ مِّنْ دُوْنِهٖ ؕ قُلْ اِنَّ الْخٰسِرِیْنَ الَّذِیْنَ خَسِرُوْٓا اَنْفُسَهُمْ
وَاَهْلِیْهِمْ یَوْمَ الْقِیٰمَةِ ؕ اَلَا ذٰلِكَ هُوَالْخُسْرَانُ الْمُبِیْنُ ﴿١٥﴾ لَهُمْ مِّنْ
فَوْقِهِمْ ظُلَلٌ مِّنَ النَّارِ وَمِنْ تَحْتِهِمْ ظُلَلٌ ؕ ذٰلِكَ یُخَوِّفُ اللّٰهُ بِهٖ
عِبَادَهٗ ؕ یٰعِبَادِ فَاتَّقُوْنِ ﴿١٦﴾ وَالَّذِیْنَ اجْتَنَبُوا الطَّاغُوْتَ اَنْ یَّعْبُدُوْهَا
وَاَنَابُوْٓا اِلَى اللّٰهِ لَهُمُ الْبُشْرٰی ۚ فَبَشِّرْ عِبَادِ ﴿١٧﴾ الَّذِیْنَ یَسْتَمِعُوْنَ
الْقَوْلَ فَیَتَّبِعُوْنَ اَحْسَنَهٗ ؕ اُولٰٓئِكَ الَّذِیْنَ هَدٰىهُمُ اللّٰهُ وَاُولٰٓئِكَ هُمْ

أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ ﴿١٨﴾ أَفَمَنْ حَقَّ عَلَيْهِ كَلِمَةُ الْعَذَابِ ۖ أَفَأَنْتَ تُنْقِذُ
مَنْ فِي النَّارِ ﴿١٩﴾ لَٰكِنِ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا رَبَّهُمْ لَهُمْ غُرَفٌ مِنْ فَوْقِهَا
غُرَفٌ مَبْنِيَّةٌ ۙ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ ۖ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ ۖ لَا يُخْلِفُ اللَّهُ
الْمِيعَادَ ﴿٢٠﴾

Say, "I have been ordered to worship Allah, making my submission exclusive to Him. [11] **And I have been ordered to be the first of those who submit."** [12] **Say, "if I were to disobey my Lord, I fear the punishment of a great day."** [13] **Say, "It is Allah whom I worship, making my submission exclusive to Him.** [14] **So, worship what you wish other than Him." Say, "Indeed, the losers are those who (will) lose their selves and their people on the Day of Judgment. Beware, that is really the obvious loss."** [15] **For them there are canopies of fire on top of them and canopies (of fire) underneath them. That is the thing against which Allah frightens His servants. 'So, O servants of Mine, fear Me.'** [16] **And those who abstain from worshipping the Taghut and turn fervently to Allah, for them there is good news. So, give the good news to My servants** [17] **who listen to what is said, then, follow the best of it. Those are the ones whom Allah has guided, and those are the ones who possess understanding.** [18] **So tell Me about the one for whom the word of punishment is destined, - is it you, then, who would save someone who is already in the Fire?** [19] **But, for those who fear their Lord, there are chambers with chambers on top of them built ready, with rivers running from underneath them. This is a promise of Allah. Allah does not go back on the promise.** [20]

Commentary

In the Tafsīr of verses 17 and 18: 'فَبَشِّرْ عِبَادِ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَمِعُونَ الْقَوْلَ فَيَتَّبِعُونَ أَحْسَنَهُ أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ هَدَاهُمُ اللَّهُ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمْ أُولُوا الْأَلْبَابِ (So, give the good news to My servants who listen to what is said, then, follow the best of it. Those are the ones whom Allah has guided, and those are the ones who possess understanding), there are several views expressed by learned commentators. One of these is what Ibn Kathīr has opted for. Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānavi has also gone by it. According to this view, the word:

القول (*al-qawl*:what is said) used here means Qur'ān, the Word of Allah, or it means the Qur'ān inclusive of the teachings of the Holy Prophet ﷺ - and all of it is but the best. Therefore, the obvious dictate of the occasion was to say: يَسْتَمِعُوْنَ الْقَوْلَ فَيَتَّبِعُوْنَه (who listen to what is said, then, follow it). But, that is not how it was said, instead, the word: اَحْسَن (*aḥsan*) was added which indicates that these people did not follow the Qur'ān and the teachings of the Holy Prophet ﷺ with any lack of discernment as is the way of some common people who hear something from someone and start following it without any inquiry, deliberation or insight. In fact, these are believers who have followed the Word of Allah and the teachings of His Rasūl after having found it true and best. As a result, towards the end of the verse, they have been praised as being: أُولُوالْاَلْبَابِ (*ulu-l-al-bab*) that is, the people of understanding, (the wise, the farsighted, and the discerning ones). Another example of this appears in the Qur'ān itself when Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام is being addressed about the Torah in the following words: فَخُذْهَا بِقُوَّةٍ وَّأْمُرْ قَوْمَكَ يَاْخُذُوْا بِاَحْسَنِهَا (So hold it firm, and ask your people to hold on to the best things in it - Al-A'rāf, 7:145). Here too, the word: اَحْسَن (ahsan) means the entire Torah and its injunctions. Similarly, in the verses cited above, 'listening to the word' means 'listening to the Qur'ān' and 'following the best' means 'following the entire Qur'ān' which has been referred to as: اَحْسَنَ الْحَدِيْثِ (ahsan al-Ḥadīth: the best thing said). In connection with this very Tafsīr - that 'al-qawl' should be taken to mean the Qur'ān particularly - some elders have also said that in the Qur'ān as well there are many injunctions that have degrees of حَسَن (*ḥasan*: good) and اَحْسَن (*aḥsan*: better, best). For example, retaliation and pardon are both permissible, but pardon is better and more graceful: وَاَنْ تَصْبِرُوْا خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ (and that you be patient is better for you - An-Nisā' - 4:25). There are many things in which the Qur'ān gives one the choice to take to what one likes without any apprehension of sin, but, on occasions, it has also pinpointed one of these as being the best and most graceful thing to do, for example: وَاَنْ تَعْفُوْآ اَقْرَبُ لِلتَّقْوٰى (And it is closer to taqwa that you forgive - Al-Baqarah, 2:237). There are many things in which concession has been granted, but opting for the way of courage and determination has still been called better and more graceful. Thus, the verse comes to mean that these people listen to the injunctions of the Qur'ān - those relating to concession (*rukhsah*) as well as those relating to the courageous determination (*'azimah*) - but elect to follow the course of determination instead of

concession. And in everything where they have a choice between two things, one being good and the other, better, then, invariably they elect to do what is better.

Then, there are many commentators who take *'al-qawl'* at this place to mean what is said by common people that includes things about *tauḥīd, shirk, kufr, Islām, ḥaqq* and *bāṭil,* even about the refinements of truth as good, better, weightier and outweighed. If we were to follow this Tafsīr, the verse would mean that, as far as listening is concerned, these people do listen to what everyone has to say - be they disbelievers or believer, be it truth or falsehood, good or bad, everything - but, when it comes to following, they follow only that which is the best. Thus, they follow *tauḥīd,* not *shirk; ḥaqq* (truth), not *bāṭil* (falsehood), and if they have to choose between the degrees of *ḥaqq*, they follow that which is better and weightier. Therefore, these people were credited with two attributes: (1) Firstly, by virtue of: هَدٰىهُمُ اللّٰهُ (Allah has guided them - 39:18), therefore, they do not go astray after having listened to so many different things. (2) Secondly, by the compliment of: أُولٰٓئِكَ هُمْ أُولُوا الْأَلْبَابِ (and they are the ones who possess understanding - 39:18), that is, they are sensible people, and their good sense, insight and discernment helps them draw the line between good and bad, true and false. Thus, when such people have the ability to distinguish between good and better and when it comes to opting for one of the two, they would opt for the better.

Therefore, it has been said that this verse was revealed about Sayyidnā Zayd Ibn 'Amr Ibn Nufayl, Sayyidnā Abū Dharr al-Ghifārī and Sayyidnā Salmān al-Farisī رضی اللہ عنہم اجمعین. Sayyidnā Zayd Ibn 'Amru Ibn Nufayl ﷺ used to hate shirk and idol worship even during the days of Jāhiliyyah. The other two Ṣaḥābah, Sayyidnā Abū Dharr al-Ghifārī and Sayyidnā Salmān al-Farisi رضی اللہ عنہم اجمعین listened to people of different religions, to the mushriks, the Jews and the Christians, and saw their ways of life, and it was only then that they embraced Islam and, finding the teachings of the Qur'ān as the best, they preferred them. (Qurṭubī)

Verses 21 - 23

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللّٰهَ أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَآءِ مَآءً فَسَلَكَهٗ يَنَابِيعَ فِى الْأَرْضِ ثُمَّ

يُخۡرِجُ بِهٖ زَرۡعًا مُّخۡتَلِفًا اَلۡوَانُهٗ ثُمَّ يَهِيۡجُ فَتَرٰىهُ مُصۡفَرًّا ثُمَّ يَجۡعَلُهٗ
حُطَامًا ؕ اِنَّ فِىۡ ذٰلِكَ لَذِكۡرٰى لِاُولِى الۡاَلۡبَابِ ﴿۲۱﴾ اَفَمَنۡ شَرَحَ اللّٰهُ
صَدۡرَهٗ لِلۡاِسۡلَامِ فَهُوَ عَلٰى نُوۡرٍ مِّنۡ رَّبِّهٖ ؕ فَوَيۡلٌ لِّلۡقٰسِيَةِ قُلُوۡبُهُمۡ مِّنۡ
ذِكۡرِ اللّٰهِ ؕ اُولٰٓئِكَ فِىۡ ضَلٰلٍ مُّبِيۡنٍ ﴿۲۲﴾ اَللّٰهُ نَزَّلَ اَحۡسَنَ الۡحَدِيۡثِ
كِتٰبًا مُّتَشَابِهًا مَّثَانِىَ ۖ تَقۡشَعِرُّ مِنۡهُ جُلُوۡدُ الَّذِيۡنَ يَخۡشَوۡنَ رَبَّهُمۡ ۚ ثُمَّ
تَلِيۡنُ جُلُوۡدُهُمۡ وَقُلُوۡبُهُمۡ اِلٰى ذِكۡرِ اللّٰهِ ؕ ذٰلِكَ هُدَى اللّٰهِ يَهۡدِىۡ بِهٖ
مَنۡ يَّشَآءُ ؕ وَمَنۡ يُّضۡلِلِ اللّٰهُ فَمَا لَهٗ مِنۡ هَادٍ ﴿۲۳﴾

Have you not seen that Allah sent down water from the sky, then made it penetrate into the earth (and gush forth) in the form of springs? Then He brings forth with it the crops of different colors, and afterwards they wither, and you see them turned yellow, then He makes them chaff. Surely in that there is a lesson for the people of understanding. [21] **So I ask about a person whose heart Allah has opened up for Islam, and consequently he proceeds in a light from his Lord. (Can he be equal to the one whose heart is hardened?) So, woe to those whose hearts are too hard to remember Allah. Those are wandering in open error.** [22] **Allah has sent down the best discourse, a book containing subjects resembling each other, mentioned again and again, shivered from which are the skins of those who have awe of their Lord. Then, their skins and their hearts become soft enough to tend to the remembrance of Allah. This is the Guidance of Allah with which He brings to the right path whomsoever He wills. As for the one whom Allah lets go astray, for him there is no one to guide.** [23]

Commentary

The word: يَنَابِيعَ (*yanābi'*) in verse 21: فَسَلَكَهٗ يَنَابِيعَ فِى الۡاَرۡضِ (made it penetrate into the earth [and gush forth] in the form of springs) is the plural form of: يَنۡبُوۡع (*yanbu'*) which means springs that gush out from the soil. The sense is that the act of sending down water from the sky is by itself a great blessing, but also crucial was the arrangement to conserve it underground. But for this arrangement to save this blessing of water, its

users would have derived benefit from it only at the time of rains, or for a few days following it. Although, on water depends their life, and it is the kind of need one cannot stay free from, even for a day. Therefore, Allah Ta'ālā did not consider it sufficient to just send down this blessing, instead, made elaborate and very unique arrangements for its conservation. Some of it gets deposited in ditches, ponds, tanks and reservoirs. Then a huge supply is turned into ice and made to sit on mountain peaks and its ridges, an arrangement that takes care of the danger of water going bad. Then ice melts and water travels through veins in the mountains until it reaches the land and gushes out in the form of streams, all over, on its own, without any human input, and finally finds its way through the land in the form of rivulets and rivers. Rest of the water keeps flowing underground which can be retrieved by digging a well almost anywhere.

Details of this water supply system as they appear in the noble Qur'ān have been given in the commentary of Sūrah Al-Mu'minūn under the verse: (then We lodged it in the earth, and of course, We are able to take it away - Al-Mu'minun, 23:18). (Please see Ma'āriful-Qur'ān, Volume VI, under 23:18, pages 311 to 313).

Later in verse 21, it was said: مُخْتَلِفًا اَلْوَانُه (the crops of different colours). At the time the crops grow and ripen, colors keep changing from one to the other. Since these colors change, therefore, the word: مُخْتَلِفًا (*mukhtalifan*), in terms of its grammatical analysis, has been used in the form of: حال (*ḥāl*: state, circumstantial condition) which denotes change.

In the last sentence of verse 21, it was said: اِنَّ فِیْ ذٰلِکَ لَذِکْرٰی لِاُولِی الْاَلْبَابِ (Surely, in that, there is a lesson for the people of understanding), that is, in this process - when water is sent down, is conserved, is made available to human beings to grow all sorts of crops and trees the colors of which change following which they turn yellow and dry making grains separate from chaff - there is a great lesson for people of understanding, because they provide the proof of the infinite power and wisdom of Allah Ta'ālā. These are visible signs that could lead human beings to discover the reality behind their own creation, and that in turn, could become the means through which one succeeds in recognizing his or her own creator and master.

In the first sentence of verse 22, it was said: اَفَمَنْ شَرَحَ اللّٰهُ صَدْرَهٗ لِلْاِسْلَامِ فَهُوَ عَلٰى نُوْرٍ مِّنْ رَّبِّهٖ (So I ask about a person whose heart Allah has opened up for Islam, and consequently he proceeds in a light from his Lord.). The word: شَرَح (*sharḥ*) literally means to open, enlarge or extend. The expression: شرح الصدر (sharḥ-uṣ-ṣadr) means the capacity or capability of the heart (to receive and accommodate input). The sense is that one's heart is capable of learning lessons and receiving benefits by deliberating into Divine signs of creation in the heavens and the earth, particularly so by deliberating in his own creation. Similar is the case with other signs of Allah revealed in the form of scriptures and injunctions. One's heart also has to have the ability to deliberate in them and be benefited by them. In contrast, there is a heart that is straightened or hardened. The statement in a verse of the Qur'ān: يَجْعَلْ صَدْرَهٗ ضَيِّقًا حَرَجًا (He makes his heart narrow, much too narrow - Al-An'ām, 6:125) and the one in the next verse at this place: لِلْقَاسِيَةِ قُلُوْبُهُمْ "woe to those whose hearts are too hard to remember Allah - 39:23" has appeared in contrast to this very 'sharḥ-uṣ-ṣadr' (a heart opened to acceptance of truth and at ease with it).

According to a narration from Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd ﷺ, when the Holy Prophet ﷺ recited this verse: اَفَمَنْ شَرَحَ اللّٰهُ صَدْرَهٗ (Is it not that, a person for whom Allah opens up his heart...), we asked him about the meaning of 'sharh-us-sadr'. He said, "when the light of *'imān* (faith) enters the human heart, it enhances its capacity (which makes the comprehension and implementation of Divine commandments easy on the person concerned)." We submitted, *'yā rasūlallāh*, what is the sign of it (that is, of 'sharḥ-uṣ-ṣadr')?' Then, he said:

الانابة الى دارالخلود والتجا فى عن دارالغرور والتأهب للموت قبل نزوله.

رواه الحاكم فى المستدرک والبيهقى فى شعب الايمان. (روح المعانى)

"Longing passionately for the eternal home, and seeking refuge from the deceptive abode, and preparing for death before its arrival." - Reported by al-Ḥākim in al-Mustadrak and al-Baihaqī in Shu'ab-ul-'imān (Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī).

The verse under study has been initiated as headed by an interrogative particle: اَفَمَنْ (*afaman*). The sense it carries can be explained by saying: 'Can a person whose heart has been opened up for Islam - and he is on the light coming from his Lord, that is, does everything under it - and another person with a hardened heart be equal?' The contrasting

part relating to the hardened heart has been mentioned in the next verse with a warning of woeful punishment attached to it.

In this verse (22), it was said: فَوَيْلٌ لِّلْقٰسِيَةِ قُلُوْبُهُمْ (woe to those whose hearts are too hard to remember Allah). The word: قَاسِيَة (*al-qāsiyah*) is a derivation from: قَسَاوَت (*qasawah*) which means to be hard-hearted, having no mercy for anyone, and also the one who remains totally unaffected by the need to remember Allah and follow His injunctions.

Verse 23 opens with the words: اَللّٰهُ نَزَّلَ اَحْسَنَ الْحَدِيْثِ كِتٰبًا مُّتَشَابِهًا مَّثَانِيَ (Allah has sent down the best discourse, a book containing subjects resembling each other, mentioned again and again,). In the verse previous to it, the state of the faithful servants of Allah was mentioned as: يَسْتَمِعُوْنَ الْقَوْلَ فَيَتَّبِعُوْنَ اَحْسَنَه (who listen to what is said, then, follow the best of it - 39:18). Here, in the verse under study (23), we have been told that the whole Qur'ān is *'aḥsan-ul-ḥadīth,'* the best of what is said. The word: حَدِيْث (Ḥadīth) literally means the speech or account that is related. The outcome of calling Qur'ān, *'aḥsan-ul-ḥadīth*, is that, out of everything human beings say or relate, the Qur'ān remains the most eloquent. Onwards from here, some attributes of the Qur'ān have been mentioned: (1) It is: كِتٰبًا مُّتَشَابِهًا (a book containing subjects resembling each other). At this place, the word: مُتَشَابِه (*mutashabih*) means resembling each other or mutually corresponding, that is, the subjects dealt with in the Qur'ān are related to each other, and are similar. So much so that one verse gets to be explained or confirmed by another verse. This 'word' is free of contradiction and conflict. (2) The second attribute is: مَثَانِيَ (*mathani*) which is the plural form of: مَثْنٰى (*mathna*) which means repeated. The sense is that a subject is taken up repeatedly in the Qur'ān to help make it settle down in one's mind. (3) As for the third attribute, it was described in very eloquent words by saying: تَقْشَعِرُّ مِنْهُ جُلُوْدُ الَّذِيْنَ يَخْشَوْنَ رَبَّهُمْ (shivered from which are the skins of those who have awe of their Lord.) that is, 'so overwhelmed and apprehensive the God-fearing become before the greatness of Allah that they, when reciting the Qur'ān, are gripped with such an state of awe that it makes their hair stand on end.' (4) The fourth attribute has been identified as: ثُمَّ تَلِيْنُ جُلُوْدُهُمْ وَقُلُوْبُهُمْ اِلٰى ذِكْرِ اللّٰهِ (Then, their skins and their hearts become soft enough to tend to the remembrance of Allah.), that is, the recitation of the Qur'ān affects them in two ways. First, as said immediately above, when they hear the warnings of

punishment, it makes their hair stand on end. Then they listen to the verses promising mercy and forgiveness which takes them to a state when their bodies and hearts turn tenderized, mellowed in the remembrance of Allah. Sayyidah Asmā’ bint Abī Bakr says that this used to be the common emotional state of the noble Ṣaḥābah - when the Qur’ān was recited before them, tear would be rolling down their eyes, and the hair would be standing on end. (Qurṭubī)

It has been narrated by Sayyidnā ‘Abdullāh Ibn ‘Abbās that the Holy Prophet said, "A servant over whose body hair would stand on end due to the fear of Allah, then, Allah Ta‘ālā forbids the Fire from ever touching his body. (Qurṭubī)

Verses 24 - 28

أَفَمَنْ يَتَّقِى بِوَجْهِهٖ سُوْٓءَ الْعَذَابِ يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ ؕ وَقِيْلَ لِلظّٰلِمِيْنَ
ذُوْقُوْا مَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْسِبُوْنَ ﴿٢٤﴾ كَذَّبَ الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ فَاَتٰىهُمُ
الْعَذَابُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَشْعُرُوْنَ ﴿٢٥﴾ فَاَذَاقَهُمُ اللّٰهُ الْخِزْىَ فِى
الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا ۚ وَلَعَذَابُ الْاٰخِرَةِ اَكْبَرُ ۘ لَوْ كَانُوْا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٢٦﴾
وَلَقَدْ ضَرَبْنَا لِلنَّاسِ فِىْ هٰذَا الْقُرْاٰنِ مِنْ كُلِّ مَثَلٍ لَّعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُوْنَ
﴿٢٧﴾ قُرْاٰنًا عَرَبِيًّا غَيْرَ ذِىْ عِوَجٍ لَّعَلَّهُمْ يَتَّقُوْنَ ﴿٢٨﴾

Tell Me about the one who tries to save himself from the worst punishment with his face on the Day of Doom, (whether he is equal to the one who is not liable to any punishment.) And it will be said to the wrongdoers, "Have a taste of what you used to earn." [24] **Those before them had also rejected (the messengers) and consequently, the punishment came upon them in a way that they had never imagined.** [25] **Then Allah made them taste disgrace in the worldly life, and of course the punishment of the Hereafter is much greater. Only if they knew!** [26] **And We have cited for people all sorts of examples in this Qur’ān, so that they may receive the message** [27] **through an Arabic Qur’ān that has no digression (from the truth), so that they may be God-fearing.** [28]

Commentary

Verse 24: اَفَمَنْ يَّتَّقِىْ بِوَجْهِهٖ (Tell Me about the one who tries to save himself from the worst punishment with his face ...) carries a description of the terrifying scenario of Jahannam. If one faces something hurtful in his mortal life, he tries to fight it off by using his hands and feet as defensive shields to protect his face. But, refuge with Allah, the people of Jahannam will not be able to use even their hands and feet to defend themselves. The punishment that comes will fall directly on their faces. Even if he wished to ward off the punishment in defense, he would have no option but to use his very face as the shield, because he would have been thrown in Jahannam with his hands and feet tied. We seek refuge with Allah from such a fate.

Out of the authorities of Tafsīr, 'Atā' and Ibn Zayd said that a person condemned to Jahannam will have his hands and feet tied before being dragged in there. (Qurṭubī)

Verses 29 - 35

ضَرَبَ اللّٰهُ مَثَلًا رَّجُلًا فِيْهِ شُرَكَآءُ مُتَشٰكِسُوْنَ وَرَجُلًا سَلَمًا
لِّرَجُلٍ ؕ هَلْ يَسْتَوِيٰنِ مَثَلًا ؕ اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ ؕ بَلْ اَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ
﴿۲۹﴾ اِنَّكَ مَيِّتٌ وَّاِنَّهُمْ مَّيِّتُوْنَ ﴿۳۰﴾ ثُمَّ اِنَّكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ عِنْدَ
رَبِّكُمْ تَخْتَصِمُوْنَ ﴿۳۱﴾ فَمَنْ اَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ كَذَبَ عَلَى اللّٰهِ وَكَذَّبَ
بِالصِّدْقِ اِذْ جَآءَهٗ ؕ اَلَيْسَ فِيْ جَهَنَّمَ مَثْوًى لِّلْكٰفِرِيْنَ ﴿۳۲﴾ وَالَّذِيْ
جَآءَ بِالصِّدْقِ وَصَدَّقَ بِهٖٓ اُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ الْمُتَّقُوْنَ ﴿۳۳﴾ لَهُمْ مَّا
يَشَآءُوْنَ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ ؕ ذٰلِكَ جَزٰٓؤُا الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ ﴿۳۴﴾ لِيُكَفِّرَ اللّٰهُ
عَنْهُمْ اَسْوَاَ الَّذِيْ عَمِلُوْا وَيَجْزِيَهُمْ اَجْرَهُمْ بِاَحْسَنِ الَّذِيْ كَانُوْا
يَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿۳۵﴾

Allah has given an example: There is a (slave) man owned by some partners quarrelling with each other, and (on the other hand,) there is a man solely owned by a single man. Can they be equal in comparison? Praise

be to Allah! (The truth stands established). But, most of them do not know. [29] **Verily, you are to die and they are to die.** [30] **After that, on the Day of Doom, you will surely place your disputes before your Lord.** [31]

So, who is more unjust than him who forges a lie against Allah and rejects the truth when it reached him? Is it not that in Jahannam (hell) there is an abode for the disbelievers? [32] **As for the one who has come with the truth and believed it to be true, then such people are the ones who are God-fearing.** [33] **For them, with their Lord, there is what they wish. That is the reward of those who are good in deeds,** [34] **so that Allah wipes out from them the worst deeds they did, and gives their reward to them for the best of what they used to do.** [35]

Commentary

In verse 30, it was said: إِنَّكَ مَيِّتٌ وَّإِنَّهُم مَّيِّتُونَ (Verily, you are to die and they are to die). The word: مَيِّت (*mayyit*) with a doubling sound on the letter: الياء (*al-yā'*) denotes someone who will die in the future and مَيْت (*mait*) with the letter *al-yā'* remaining quiescent, someone who has died. In this verse, the address is to the Holy Prophet ﷺ and it is being said to him that he too is to die and so are his friends and foes, who will also die. The objective behind the statement is to alert and persuade everyone to be concerned about the Hereafter and be ready to do everything necessary to achieve this goal. Then, as an inter-related side of the subject, the purpose is also to make it very clear that the Holy Prophet ﷺ too, despite being the most sublime among the creation and the foremost among prophets, is not exempted from death, so that people would not differ about this matter after his passing away from this mortal world (from al-Qurṭubī).

Justice in the court of Resurrection: The form in which the right of the oppressed will be retrieved from the oppressor.

In verse 31, it was said: ثُمَّ إِنَّكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ عِندَ رَبِّكُمْ تَخْتَصِمُونَ (After that, on the Day of Doom, you will surely place your disputes before your Lord.). Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه says that the word: إِنَّكُمْ (*innakum*: surely you...) at this place includes - believers, disbelievers, Muslims - all of them, oppressor or oppressed. All of them will submit their cases in the court of their Lord, and He will have the right of the oppressed paid back by the oppressor whether a disbeliever, or believer. And the form in which

these rights will be paid back will be what has mentioned in a narration of Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ﷺ that appears in the Ṣaḥīḥ of al-Bukhārī. According to this, the Holy Prophet ﷺ said, 'a person who has a right of someone due against him should either pay it off, or have it forgiven right here in this world and become halal, that is, stand absolved of any responsibility on that count. The reason is that there are not going to be any currencies of dirhams and dinars (or any others found in the mortal world) in the universe of the Hereafter. If the oppressor has some good deeds in his account, then, these deeds will be taken from him to the measure of the oppression he did, and will be given to the oppressed. And in case he has no good deeds with him, bad deeds and sins of the oppressed will be taken from him and put into the account of the oppressor.

And there is a narration of Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ﷺ in Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim according to which the Holy Prophet ﷺ on a certain day asked his noble Sahabah, "Do you know who a pauper is?" The Sahabah said, '*yā rasūlallāh*, as for us, a pauper is one who has neither cash nor things needed (to run one's life).' He said, "The real pauper in my Ummah is a person who will come to the Day of Judgment with lots of good deeds, prayers, fasts, zakah and things like that, but such would the record (of his dealings with others) that he (in his mortal life) would have hurled invectives on someone, leveled false accusation against someone, devoured someone's property by unfair means, had someone killed, beaten or harassed. All those so oppressed will take their plaint before Allah, and the good deeds of the oppressor will be distributed over the oppressed. After that, when no good deeds are left, and the claims of the oppressed still remain to be settled, then, the sins of the oppressed will be passed on to the oppressor, and he will be thrown into the Jahannam. [Hence, this person despite having everything, ended up being a pauper on the Day of Judgment - he is what a real pauper is!]

And Ṭabarānī, citing a trustworthy authority, has reported from Sayyidnā Abū Ayyūb al-Anṣārī ﷺ that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "The first case presented in the court of Allah will be that of man and his wife and, by God, the tongue will be silent there, instead, hands and feet of the woman will bear witness as to blames she used to impute to her husband. Similarly, the hands and feet of the man will bear witness as to

how he used to cause pain to his wife. After that, servants will be brought before their respective masters, and redress will be provided for their complaints. After that, people from common markets with whom one had one or the other dealing will be presented, and if one of them has been subjected to some injustice, his right will be duly vacated.'

All deeds will be given against oppressions and infringement of rights, but one's *'imān* (faith) will not be given

After having reported all Ḥadīth narrations cited above, it has been said in Tafsīr Maẓharī that the thing mentioned about giving the deeds of the oppressor in settlement of the rights of the oppressed means deeds other than *'imān* (faith). The reason is that all oppressions and injustices are acts of sin. They are not *kufr* or disbelief. And the punishment of sinful deeds will be limited as against *'imān* (faith) which is a limitless deed. Its reward too is limitless, that is, living in Jannah forever - even though, it may happen after having gone through the punishment of sins and staying in Jahannam for a certain period of time. The outcome is, when the good deeds of the oppressor - with the exception of *'imān* (faith) - will finish once given to the oppressed to the last deed leaving nothing behind but *'imān*, then, this *'imān* will not be taken away from him forcibly. Instead, the rights of the oppressed will be paid back by putting the sins of the oppressed in the account of the oppressor. As a result, this person will, after he has undergone the punishment of his sins, will finally enter the Jannah, and then this state of his will be everlasting. The author of Tafsīr Maẓharī says that Imām al-Baihaqī has also said so.

In verse 32, it was said: كَذَّبَ بِالصِّدْقِ (rejects the truth) while in verse 33, it was said: الَّذِى جَآءَ بِالصِّدْقِ (As for the one who has come with the truth): At both these places, the word: اَلصِّدْقِ (*aṣ-ṣidq*: the truth) means teachings brought by the Holy Prophet ﷺ, whether it be the Qur'ān, or be other teachings of aḥādīth in addition to the Qur'ān. And the expression: صَدَّقَ بِهٖ (*ṣaddaqa bihi*: and believed it to be true - 39:33) includes all believers who have testified to it.

Verses 36 - 41

اَلَيْسَ اللّٰهُ بِكَافٍ عَبْدَهٗ ؕ وَيُخَوِّفُوْنَكَ بِالَّذِيْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِهٖ ؕ وَمَنْ
يُّضْلِلِ اللّٰهُ فَمَالَهٗ مِنْ هَادٍ ﴿٣٦﴾ وَمَنْ يَّهْدِ اللّٰهُ فَمَالَهٗ مِنْ مُّضِلٍّ ؕ

اَلَيْسَ اللّٰهُ بِعَزِيْزٍ ذِى انْتِقَامٍ ﴿٣٧﴾ وَلَئِنْ سَاَلْتَهُمْ مَّنْ خَلَقَ السَّمٰوٰتِ
وَالْاَرْضَ لَيَقُوْلُنَّ اللّٰهُ ط قُلْ اَفَرَءَيْتُمْ مَّا تَدْعُوْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ اِنْ
اَرَادَنِىَ اللّٰهُ بِضُرٍّ هَلْ هُنَّ كٰشِفٰتُ ضُرِّهٖٓ اَوْ اَرَادَنِىْ بِرَحْمَةٍ هَلْ هُنَّ
مُمْسِكٰتُ رَحْمَتِهٖ ط قُلْ حَسْبِىَ اللّٰهُ ط عَلَيْهِ يَتَوَكَّلُ الْمُتَوَكِّلُوْنَ
﴿٣٨﴾ قُلْ يٰقَوْمِ اعْمَلُوْا عَلٰى مَكَانَتِكُمْ اِنِّىْ عَامِلٌ ج فَسَوْفَ تَعْلَمُوْنَ
﴿٣٩﴾ مَنْ يَّاْتِيْهِ عَذَابٌ يُّخْزِيْهِ وَيَحِلُّ عَلَيْهِ عَذَابٌ مُّقِيْمٌ ﴿٤٠﴾ اِنَّآ
اَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتٰبَ لِلنَّاسِ بِالْحَقِّ ج فَمَنِ اهْتَدٰى فَلِنَفْسِهٖ ج وَمَنْ
ضَلَّ فَاِنَّمَا يَضِلُّ عَلَيْهَا ج وَمَآ اَنْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ بِوَكِيْلٍ ﴿٤١﴾ ع

Is Allah not sufficient for (the protection of) His slave? And they are frightening you of those (false gods whom they worship) other than Him. And whomsoever Allah would let go astray, for him there is no one to guide. [36] And whomsoever Allah gives guidance, for him there is no one to misguide. Is it not that Allah is Mighty, Powerful to avenge? [37] And if you ask them as to who created the heavens and the earth, they will certainly say, "Allah." Say, "Then, tell me about those whom you invoke other than Allah, if Allah intends to cause some harm to me, are they (able) to remove the harm caused by Him? Or if He intends to bless me with mercy, are they (able) to hold back His mercy (from me)?" Say, "Allah is sufficient for me. In Him trust those who (rightly) trust (in someone)." [38] Say, "O my people, do at your place (what you are doing). I am to do (what I have been ordered to do). Very soon, you will come to know [39] as to who will be visited by a punishment that will disgrace him, and upon whom a lasting punishment will befall. [40] We have sent down to you the Book for the people with the truth. So, whoever follows the guidance, it is for his own good, and whoever goes astray, he will go astray only to his detriment - and you are not responsible for them. [41]

Commentary

In the first verse (36), it was said: 'اَلَيْسَ اللّٰهُ بِكَافٍ عَبْدَهٗ' (Is Allah not sufficient for (the protection of) His slave?). This verse was revealed in the

background of an event. The disbelievers had threatened the Holy Prophet ﷺ and his noble Ṣaḥābah by saying that, should they act irreverently against their idols, they would never escape the curse of these idols, something very lethal to face. In reply, they were told: Is Allah not sufficient for His slave?

Therefore, some commentators have taken: عَبْدَهٗ (*'abdāhu*: His slave) here to mean a particular slave of Allah, that is, the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānavi, a summary of whose Tafsīr appears in the original edition of Ma'āriful-Qur'ān, has also opted for this very Tafsīr. Then there are other commentators who have taken *'abd* or slave in its general sense. Another *qira'ah* (rendition) of this verse as: عِبَادَهٗ (*'ibādihī*: His slaves) supports this position. And as for the subject itself, it is, after all, general in the sense that Allah Ta'ālā is sufficient for everyone among His slaves.

A lesson, and a good counsel

In verse 36, it was said: وَيُخَوِّفُوْنَكَ بِالَّذِيْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِهٖ (And they are frightening you of those [false gods whom they worship] other than Him.), that is, 'the disbelievers frighten you with the displeasure of their false objects of worship'. Readers of this verse generally tend to pass by it thinking that it is talking about a particular event that relates to the threats of disbelievers and to the blessed person of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, hence they would not exert enough to find out the guidance that it has for us. Although, it is an open fact that anyone who threatens a Muslim on the ground that, should he not do such and such haram act or sin, his superiors at whose mercy he is, will be displeased with him, and may even hurt him is also included under this verse, even if the person giving a threat is a Muslim, and the person he is being threatened of is also no one else but a Muslim, virtually Muslims on both sides. And these are terrible times for all. This happens all over the world, in most jobs they do. They have to face a dilemma. Are they willing and ready to contravene the Divine laws (they are bound with)? Or else, are they prepared to become targets of the wrath and retribution of their superior officers? This verse gives a guideline good enough for all of them: Is Allah Ta'ālā not sufficient to protect you? Here you are. You make a resolve that you will abstain from committing sins exclusively for the sake of Allah. Then you simply do not care about any officer, any authority asking you to act

counter to Divine laws. If you do just that, the help and support of Allah Ta'ālā shall be with you. The worst that can happen is that you may lose that job. So, what? Allah Ta'ālā will make some other arrangement for your sustenance. And for that matter, it is typical of a believer that he himself keeps trying to find a suitable job elsewhere after which he is placed in a position of leaving it immediately.

Verses 42 - 45

اَللّٰهُ يَتَوَفَّى الْاَنْفُسَ حِيْنَ مَوْتِهَا وَالَّتِيْ لَمْ تَمُتْ فِيْ مَنَامِهَاۚ فَيُمْسِكُ
الَّتِيْ قَضٰى عَلَيْهَا الْمَوْتَ وَيُرْسِلُ الْاُخْرٰٓى اِلٰٓى اَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّىؕ اِنَّ فِيْ
ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيٰتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَّتَفَكَّرُوْنَ ﴿٤٢﴾ اَمِ اتَّخَذُوْا مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ شُفَعَآءَؕ قُلْ
اَوَلَوْ كَانُوْا لَا يَمْلِكُوْنَ شَيْئًا وَّلَا يَعْقِلُوْنَ ﴿٤٣﴾ قُلْ لِّلّٰهِ الشَّفَاعَةُ
جَمِيْعًاؕ لَهٗ مُلْكُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِؕ ثُمَّ اِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُوْنَ ﴿٤٤﴾ وَاِذَا ذُكِرَ
اللّٰهُ وَحْدَهُ اشْمَاَزَّتْ قُلُوْبُ الَّذِيْنَ لَا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِالْاٰخِرَةِۚ وَاِذَا ذُكِرَ الَّذِيْنَ
مِنْ دُوْنِهٖٓ اِذَا هُمْ يَسْتَبْشِرُوْنَ ﴿٤٥﴾

Allah fully takes away the souls (of the people) at the time of their death, and (of) those who do not die, in their sleep. Then He withholds those on whom He had decreed death, and sends the others back upto an appointed term. Surely, in this, there are signs for a people who ponder. [42] Is it that they have adopted intercessors out of those (whom they invoke) other than Allah? Say, "(Do you take them as intercessors) even though they have no power at all, nor do they understand?" [43] Say, "Intercession belongs entirely to Allah. [44] And when Allah is mentioned alone, the hearts of those who do not believe in the Hereafter are filled with disgust, and when those (whom they worship) other than Him are mentioned, they become happy forthwith. [45]

Commentary

The time to sleep and the time to die: How is the soul exacted and what is the difference between the two

In verse 42, it was said: اَللّٰهُ يَتَوَفَّى الْاَنْفُسَ حِيْنَ مَوْتِهَا وَالَّتِيْ لَمْ تَمُتْ فِيْ مَنَامِهَا (Allah

fully takes away the souls [of the people] at the time of their death, and [of] those who do not die, in their sleep.). The word: توفّی (*tawaffa*) literally means to receive, to take back, exact. In this verse, Allah Ta'ālā has stated very clearly and emphatically that the spirits or souls (*arwah*) of living beings are under the free will and discretionary dispensation of Allah Ta'ālā at all times and under all conditions. He can seize, exact and take them back at will. And there is at least one manifestation of this absolutely autonomous dispensation that every living being sees and feels everyday when, once asleep, the *rūḥ* (spirit, soul) of a person is, so to say, taken away from the body, then, returned on rising from sleep, and ultimately, one such time is bound to come when this ruh stands seized, absolutely and conclusively, following which, this will never be returned.

According to Tafsīr Maẓharī, the sense of 'taking the *rūḥ* away' is to sever its connection with the human body. There are occasions when it is totally severed, both outwardly and inwardly. This is what death is. Then, there are occasions when it is severed only outwardly while it remains active inwardly, the effect of which is that it is only the sense and volitional movement - being obvious signs of life - that are severed, however, the connection of *rūḥ* with the body remains active inwardly. Under this arrangement, one breathes and stays alive, however, the form it takes is that the human spirit (*rūḥ*) is made to turn its attention to a (panoramic) study of the universe of images ('Alam-ul-mithal), and whereby it is made to pass into a state of forgetfulness and suspension away from this universe, so that one can become fully at rest. And then, at times, even this inward connection is severed because of which the life of the body goes extinct, totally.

In the verse cited above, the word: توفّی (*yatawaffa*) in the sense of 'takes in full' (*qabḍ*) is used by way of *'umum-ul- majāz* which covers both meanings. This difference of ruh (spirit, soul) being taken away both in death and sleep delineated earlier also finds support in a saying of Sayyidnā 'Alī ؓ. He said that, at the time of sleep, the *rūḥ* of a person goes away from his body, but a beam or ray of *rūḥ* stays behind in the body due to which one remains alive - and it is through this 'beamed' connection that one sees a dream. Then this dream, in the event that it has been seen in the state the attention of the ruh was raptly turned towards the universe of images, is a true dream. But, if it was seen in a

state when the *rūḥ* was returning back to the body, then, it becomes polluted with Satanic inputs, and that dream no more remains a true dream. And he also said that the *rūḥ* that comes out of the body of a person during the state of sleep returns to the body when one wakes up within a time that is much less than an eye would take to wink.

Verses 46 - 52

قُلِ اللّٰهُمَّ فَاطِرَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ عٰلِمَ الْغَيْبِ وَ الشَّهَادَةِ اَنْتَ تَحْكُمُ
بَيْنَ عِبَادِكَ فِيْ مَاكَانُوْا فِيْهِ يَخْتَلِفُوْنَ ﴿٤٦﴾ وَلَوْ اَنَّ لِلَّذِيْنَ ظَلَمُوْا مَا
فِي الْاَرْضِ جَمِيْعًا وَّمِثْلَهٗ مَعَهٗ لَافْتَدَوْا بِهٖ مِنْ سُوْٓءِ الْعَذَابِ يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ ط
وَبَدَا لَهُمْ مِّنَ اللّٰهِ مَالَمْ يَكُوْنُوا يَحْتَسِبُوْنَ ﴿٤٧﴾ وَبَدَا لَهُمْ سَيِّاٰتُ
مَاكَسَبُوْا وَحَاقَ بِهِمْ مَّاكَانُوْا بِهٖ يَسْتَهْزِءُوْنَ ﴿٤٨﴾ فَاِذَا مَسَّ الْاِنْسَانَ
ضُرٌّ دَعَانَا ز ثُمَّ اِذَا خَوَّلْنٰهُ نِعْمَةً مِّنَّا لا قَالَ اِنَّمَا اُوْتِيْتُهٗ عَلٰى عِلْمٍ ط بَلْ هِيَ
فِتْنَةٌ وَّلٰكِنَّ اَكْثَرَهُمْ لَايَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٤٩﴾ قَدْ قَالَهَا الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ فَمَا
اَغْنٰى عَنْهُمْ مَّا كَانُوْا يَكْسِبُوْنَ ﴿٥٠﴾ فَاَصَابَهُمْ سَيِّاٰتُ مَاكَسَبُوْا ط
وَالَّذِيْنَ ظَلَمُوْا مِنْ هٰٓؤُلَآءِ سَيُصِيْبُهُمْ سَيِّاٰتُ مَا كَسَبُوْا لا وَمَاهُمْ
بِمُعْجِزِيْنَ ﴿٥١﴾ اَوَلَمْ يَعْلَمُوْٓا اَنَّ اللّٰهَ يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَنْ يَّشَآءُ وَيَقْدِرُ ط
اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيٰتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يُّؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿٥٢﴾ ع

Say, "O Allah, the Creator of the heavens and the earth, the Knower of the unseen and the seen, you will judge between Your servants in that about which they used to differ. [46] **And were the wrongdoers to own all that is on earth, and even twice as much, they would surely seek to ransom themselves with it against the evil punishment on the Day of Judgment. And there will appear to them from Allah what they have never imagined.** [47] **And unveiled to them will be the evils of what they used to earn; and encircled they will be by what they used to ridicule.** [48]

And when man is visited by a trouble, he prays to Us, but when, after that, We favor him with some blessing from

Us, he says, "This is given to me because of (my) knowledge." No, but this is a trial, yet most of them do not know. [49] **The same was said by those before them, but what they used to earn was of no avail to them,** [50] **and they were overtaken by the evils of what they had earned; and the wrongdoers from these (infidels too) will be overtaken by the evils of what they have earned- and they are not (able) to escape.** [51] **Do they not know that it is Allah who extends provision for whomsoever He wills, and straitens (it for whomsoever He wills). Surely in that, there are signs for a people who believe.** [52]

In verse 46, it was said: قُلِ اللّٰهُمَّ فَاطِرَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ (Say, "O Allah, Creator of the heavens and the earth...). According to a narration of Sayyidnā 'Abd-ur-Raḥmān Ibn 'Awf ﷺ appearing in Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, he says, "I asked Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضى الله عنها as to what it was from which the Holy Prophet ﷺ began his nightly prayer (*tahajjūd*)? She said, 'When he rose for the *ṣalāh* of *tahajjūd,* he used to recite this prayer:

اَللّٰهُمَّ رَبَّ جِبْرِيْلَ وَمِيْكَآئِيْلَ وَاِسْرَافِيْلَ، فَاطِرَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ عٰلِمَ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ اَنْتَ تَحْكُمُ بَيْنَ عِبَادِكَ فِيْمَا كَانُوْا فِيْهِ يَخْتَلِفُوْنَ، اِهْدِنِىْ لِمَا اخْتُلِفَ فِيْهِ مِنَ الْحَقِّ بِاِذْنِكَ اِنَّكَ تَهْدِىْ مَنْ تَشَآءُ اِلٰى صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيْمٍ.

O Allah, Lord of Jabra'īl and Mika'īl and Israfīl, Creator of the heavens and the earth, Knower of the unseen and the seen, you will judge between Your servants in that about which they used to differ.. Guide me, with Your will, to the truth in which people have disputes, for You are the One who guides whomsoever He wills to the straight path.

A prayer that is answered

Sayyidnā Sa'īd Ibn Jubayr ﷺ says that he knows a verse of the noble Qur'ān after reciting which the prayer one makes is answered. Then he pointed out to this very verse that begins with the words: اَللّٰهُمَّ فَاطِرَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ (O Allah, Creator of the heavens and the earth... to the end of verse 39:46) - (al-Qurṭubī)

In verse 47, it was said: وَبَدَا لَهُمْ مِّنَ اللّٰهِ مَالَمْ يَكُوْنُوْا يَحْتَسِبُوْنَ (And there will appear to them from Allah what they have never imagined.) The famous *tabiʻī,* Sufyān Thawrī recited this verse and said, 'Ruined are those who did good deeds only to pretend their piety before people. (He repeated this sentence twice) This verse is about them. They did good deeds in their mortal life to impress people, who took them to be good people. Even they

themselves used to deceive themselves by thinking that these deeds will become a source of salvation for them in the Hereafter. But, as these were never performed with unalloyed sincerity (*'ikhlāṣ*), they deserve no reward in the sight of Allah. So, once they are in the life after death, the punishment would come upon them suddenly against their expectation.' (Qurṭubī)

An important instruction concerning '*mushajarāt*' (disagreements among Ṣaḥābah)

Someone asked Rabi' Ibn-ul-Khaitham about the *shahādah* (martyrdom) of Sayyidnā Ḥusain ﷺ. He sighed and recited the verse (46): قُلِ اللّٰهُمَّ فَاطِرَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ عٰلِمَ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ اَنْتَ تَحْكُمُ بَيْنَ عِبَادِكَ (O Allah, Creator of the heavens and the earth, Knower of the unseen and the seen, You will judge between Your servants...) and said, 'whenever you have a doubt in your heart about the mutual difference of the noble Ṣaḥābah, do recite this verse.' Tafsīr Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī reports this statement and then says: This teaches us the best etiquette in regard to this issue, and is something one should always bear in mind.

Verses 53 - 61

قُلْ يٰعِبَادِيَ الَّذِيْنَ اَسْرَفُوْا عَلٰٓى اَنْفُسِهِمْ لَا تَقْنَطُوْا مِنْ رَّحْمَةِ اللّٰهِ ۭ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوْبَ جَمِيْعًا ۭ اِنَّهٗ هُوَ الْغَفُوْرُ الرَّحِيْمُ ﴿٥٣﴾ وَاَنِيْبُوْٓا اِلٰى رَبِّكُمْ وَاَسْلِمُوْا لَهٗ مِنْ قَبْلِ اَنْ يَّاْتِيَكُمُ الْعَذَابُ ثُمَّ لَا تُنْصَرُوْنَ ﴿٥٤﴾ وَاتَّبِعُوْٓا اَحْسَنَ مَآ اُنْزِلَ اِلَيْكُمْ مِّنْ رَّبِّكُمْ مِّنْ قَبْلِ اَنْ يَّاْتِيَكُمُ الْعَذَابُ بَغْتَةً وَّاَنْتُمْ لَا تَشْعُرُوْنَ ﴿٥٥﴾ اَنْ تَقُوْلَ نَفْسٌ يّٰحَسْرَتٰى عَلٰى مَا فَرَّطْتُّ فِيْ جَنْۢبِ اللّٰهِ وَاِنْ كُنْتُ لَمِنَ السّٰخِرِيْنَ ﴿٥٦﴾ اَوْ تَقُوْلَ لَوْ اَنَّ اللّٰهَ هَدٰىنِيْ لَكُنْتُ مِنَ الْمُتَّقِيْنَ ﴿٥٧﴾ اَوْ تَقُوْلَ حِيْنَ تَرَى الْعَذَابَ لَوْ اَنَّ لِيْ كَرَّةً فَاَكُوْنَ مِنَ الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ ﴿٥٨﴾ بَلٰى قَدْ جَاۗءَتْكَ اٰيٰتِيْ فَكَذَّبْتَ بِهَا وَاسْتَكْبَرْتَ وَكُنْتَ مِنَ الْكٰفِرِيْنَ ﴿٥٩﴾ وَيَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ تَرَى الَّذِيْنَ كَذَبُوْا عَلَى اللّٰهِ وُجُوْهُهُمْ مُّسْوَدَّةٌ ۭ

أَلَيْسَ فِى جَهَنَّمَ مَثْوًى لِّلْمُتَكَبِّرِينَ ﴿٦٠﴾ وَيُنَجِّى اللّٰهُ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا
بِمَفَازَتِهِمْ لَا يَمَسُّهُمُ السُّوْءُ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُوْنَ ﴿٦١﴾

Say (on My behalf), "O servants of Mine who have acted recklessly against their own selves, do not despair of Allah's mercy. Surely, Allah will forgive all sins. Surely, He is the One who is the Most-Forgiving, the Very-Merciful. [53] **Turn passionately towards your Lord, and submit to Him before the punishment comes to you, after which you will not be helped.** [54] **And follow the best of what has been sent down to you from your Lord before the punishment comes to you suddenly when you do not even expect,** [55] **lest someone should say, "Pity on me, because I fell short in respect of (observing the rights of) Allah and in fact, I was one of those who mocked",** [56] **or, (lest) someone should say, "If Allah were to show me the way, I would have surely been among those who fear Allah",** [57] **or, (lest) someone should say when he sees the punishment, "O that I had a chance to return, so that I may become one of those who are good in deeds."** [58] **Why not? My verses had reached you, but you called them untrue, and waxed proud, and became of those who disbelieved.** [59] **And on the Day of Judgment, you will see those who had forged lies against Allah (in a state) that their faces are turned black. Is it not that in Jahannam there is an abode for the arrogant?** [60] **And Allah will save the God-fearing (from Jahannam), with utmost success granted to them, so as no evil will touch them, nor will they grieve.** [61]

Commentary

Verse 53 opens with the words: قُلْ يٰعِبَادِىَ الَّذِيْنَ اَسْرَفُوْا (O servants of Mine who have acted recklessly against their own selves, do not despair of Allah's mercy. Surely, Allah will forgive all sins.). Taba'ī, Sa'īd Ibn Jubayr reports from Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ that there were some people who had killed a lot of people unjustly and had committed a lot of shameful acts. They came to the Holy Prophet ﷺ and submitted before him, 'The religion you invite us to is, no doubt, very good, but we have a problem. We think about all those major sins we have already committed. Now if we were to become Muslims, do you hope that our repentance will be accepted?' Thereupon, Allah Ta'ālā revealed this verse to the Holy

Prophet ﷺ - reported by al-Bukhārī in that sense (al-Qurṭubī).

Therefore, the outcome of the subject taken up in the verse comes to be that, well before death arrives, the repentance made from sins, no matter how serious, even from *kufr* (disbelief) and *shirk* (ascribing of partners to Allah), gets to be accepted. And by virtue of a genuine taubah (repentance), all sins will be forgiven, therefore, no one should lose hope in the mercy of Allah.

Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Umar ﷺ said that, out of all verses of the Qur'ān, this verse brings the strongest message of hope for sinners. But, Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ said that the strongest such verse is: اِنَّ رَبَّکَ لَذُوْ مَغْفِرَةٍ لِّلنَّاسِ عَلٰی ظُلْمِهِمْ (And surely, your Lord is the lord of forgiveness for the people against their wrongdoings - Ar-Ra'd, 13:6)

In verse 55, it was said: وَاتَّبِعُوْٓا اَحْسَنَ مَآ اُنْزِلَ اِلَيْكُمْ (and follow the best of what has been sent down to you). The second phrase: اَحْسَنَ مَآ اُنْزِلَ (the best of what has been sent down) means the Qur'ān, and the whole Qur'ān is but ahsan, the best - and the Qur'ān can be called: احسن و اکمل (best) also in the sense that out of all scriptures - Torah, Injīl, Zabūr - revealed from Allah Ta'ālā, the Qur'ān is the best and the most perfect. (Qurṭubī)

The next three verses (56-58), beginning from: اَنْ تَقُوْلَ نَفْسٌ يّٰحَسْرَتٰی (Pity on me, because I fell short in respect of Allah... 39:56) and concluding on: مِنَ الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ (...become one of those who are good in deed - 39:58), have elaborated and emphasized the subject of the three verses earlier to it (53-55), that no sinner of any description should despair of the mercy of Allah, for should he repent, Allah will forgive all his past sins. But through the use of the expression: اَنْ تَقُوْلَ نَفْسٌ (lest someone should say) at the head of the three verses: 56, 57 and 58, it was reminded that the time of taubah has a deadline - it has to be well before death. If someone were to think of making his taubah after death on the Day of Judgment, or is simply filled with remorse over what awful things he had done to himself, then, that will bring him no benefit.

In this context, it has been mentioned that some disbelievers, on the Day of Judgment, would express different wishes, regretting what they had done. Someone will be filled with remorse as to why did he have to fall short in obeying the commands of Allah Ta'ālā. Then, there will be that odd person even at a place like that who would love to wriggle out of

the impasse blaming his destiny for his misconduct by saying - 'Had Allah Ta'ālā given me the necessary guidance, I too would have been one of those who feared Him, but since He gave me no guidance, there was nothing I could do about it.' Still someone else would wish: 'Would that I were to be sent back into the world to become an observing believer, obeying the commandments of Allah at its best.' But, that will be a time when no wish and no remorse of any kind will work.

These three different wishes could belong to different people, and it is also possible that these three wishes could have come, one after the other, from a single group of disbelievers, because, with the last saying which mentions the wish to be sent back to this world, it has been said in the verse that it will come to pass after they had seen the punishment. This obviously suggests that the first two sayings belong to a time before they saw the punishment, that is, it will be on the very first day of Qiyāmah that they will remember the shortcomings of their deeds and say: يٰحَسْرَتٰى عَلٰى مَا فَرَّطْتُّ فِىْ جَنْبِ اللّٰهِ (Pity on me, because I fell short in respect of Allah ...39:56). Later, as an excuse, they will say that they were helpless, and had Allah guided them, they too would have become obedient and fearing, but when He Himself gave them no guidance, they were hardly at fault. After that, when they see the punishment, they would wish to be sent back into the world. In these three verses, Allah Ta'ālā has made it very clear that the forgiveness and mercy of Allah is very extensive. But, it can be won only when one repents before death. Therefore, Allah was alerting them right there against the possibility that they start to show remorse after death, and indulge in these redundant wishes in the Hereafter.

In verse 59, it was said: بَلٰى قَدْ جَآءَتْكَ اٰيٰتِىْ فَكَذَّبْتَ بِهَا (Why not? My verses had reached you, but you called them untrue, and waxed proud, and became of those who disbelieved....). In this verse, what the disbelievers said in: (If Allah were to show me the way, I would have surely been among those who fear Allah",- 39:57) has been answered. The outcome of this verse is that Allah had already given the necessary guidance, fully and conclusively. He had sent His books, verses and signs. Therefore, their claim that Allah gave them no guidance was absurd. Of course, once He had given the guidance, Allah never forced anyone to be good and obedient. In fact, every servant of His was given the choice to take to

either the way of the truth or the way of the false. This was a test for the maker of the choice. On this depended his or her success or failure. Whoever took to the way of error by one's own free will, choice and volition, he or she is, himself or herself, responsible for it.

Verses 62 - 67

اَللّٰهُ خَالِقُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ ز وَّهُوَ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَّكِيْلٌ ﴿٦٢﴾ لَهٗ مَقَالِيْدُ
السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ ط وَالَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا بِاٰيٰتِ اللّٰهِ اُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ
الْخٰسِرُوْنَ ﴿٦٣﴾ قُلْ اَفَغَيْرَ اللّٰهِ تَاْمُرُوْٓنِّيْٓ اَعْبُدُ اَيُّهَا الْجٰهِلُوْنَ ﴿٦٤﴾
وَلَقَدْ اُوْحِيَ اِلَيْكَ وَاِلَى الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ ج لَئِنْ اَشْرَكْتَ لَيَحْبَطَنَّ
عَمَلُكَ وَلَتَكُوْنَنَّ مِنَ الْخٰسِرِيْنَ ﴿٦٥﴾ بَلِ اللّٰهَ فَاعْبُدْ وَكُنْ مِّنَ
الشّٰكِرِيْنَ ﴿٦٦﴾ وَمَا قَدَرُوا اللّٰهَ حَقَّ قَدْرِهٖ صلے وَالْاَرْضُ جَمِيْعًا قَبْضَتُهٗ
يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ وَالسَّمٰوٰتُ مَطْوِيّٰتٌ م بِيَمِيْنِهٖ ط سُبْحٰنَهٗ وَتَعٰلٰى عَمَّا
يُشْرِكُوْنَ ﴿٦٧﴾

Allah is Creator of everything, and He is the Guardian over everything. [62] To Him belong the keys to the heavens and the earth. As for those who have rejected the verses of Allah, it is they who are the losers. [63] Say, "Is it, then, someone other than Allah that you ask me to worship, O ignorant people?" [64] And it has already been revealed to you and to those before you (that): If you associate (partners with Allah), your deeds shall be rendered useless, and you shall be among the losers. [65] On the contrary, it is Allah whom you should worship; and be among the grateful. [66] And they did not hold Allah in His true esteem. And the whole earth will be in a single grip of His hand on the Day of Doom, and the heavens (will be) rolled up on his right hand. Pure is He, far too high from what they ascribe to Him. [67]

Commentary

The word: مَقَالِيْد (*maqālīd*) in: لَهٗ مَقَالِيْدُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ (To Him belong the keys to the heavens and the earth.- 39:63) is the plural form of: مِقْلَاد

(*miqlād*) or: مِقْلِيد (*miqlid*) meaning a key. It has been said that this word has really been Arabicized from the Persian language. In Persian, a key is called كليد (*kalid*). When Arabicized, it became: اقليد (*iqlid*) with its plural being: مَقَالِيد (*maqālid*) (Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī). Having keys in one's hand denotes ownership, possession and the ability to dispense at will. Therefore, the sense of the verse is that the keys to whatever treasures lie hidden in the heavens and the earth are in the hands of Allah and He alone is the custodian and the dispenser in that it is He who gives whenever He wills to whomever He wills and as much as He wills - and would just not give to anyone He so wills.

And in some narrations of Ḥadīth, the third kalimah, that is: سُبْحَانَ اللّٰهِ وَالْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ وَلَآ اِلٰهَ اِلاَّ اللّٰهُ وَاللّٰهُ اَكْبَرُ وَلَا حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ اِلاَّبِاللّٰهِ الْعَلِيِّ الْعَظِيْم (Pure is Allah and Praised is Allah and there is no god worthy of worship but Allah and Allah is Great and there is no strength and there is no power except from Allah, the High, the Great) has been called: مَقَالِيْدُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ ('the keys to the heavens and the earth' - 39:63). The outcome is: One who recites this kalimah, mornings and evenings, is blessed by Allah Ta'ālā from the treasures of the heavens and the earth. Ibn-ul-Jawzi has declared these narrations to be: موضوع (mawdu': fabricated, forged;). But, other Ḥadīth experts have rated these as weak ضعيف (*ḍa'if*) *aḥādīth* that can be relied upon in the matter of the merits of good deeds. (Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī)

In the last verse (67), it was said: وَالْاَرْضُ جَمِيْعًا قَبْضَتُهٗ يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ وَالسَّمٰوٰتُ مَطْوِيّٰتٌ بِيَمِيْنِهٖ (and the whole earth will be in a single grip of His hand on the Day of Doom and the heavens, rolled up on His right hand). The earth being in the hand-grip of Allah Ta'ālā and the heavens being rolled up on His right hand appears here, in the view of the early forbears of Islam, in its real sense. But, the subject of the verse falls in the category of al-mutashabihat (of hidden meaning) the reality of which is not known to anyone except Allah Ta'ālā. For people in general, even trying to find out its reality is forbidden. Hence, the thing to do is no more but to believe that whatever Allah Ta'ālā means thereby is true and correct. And since the apparent words of this verse seem to suggest grasp, grip or a hand holding something ('qabdah', mutthi, handful) as well as the presence of a right hand that are parts of a body while Allah Ta'ālā is pure and free from body and physicality. To this, towards the end of the verse, a hint was released: Do not take these words on the analogy of your body limbs.

Allah Ta'ālā is free from these: سُبْحٰنَهٗ وَتَعٰلٰى عَمَّا يُشْرِكُوْنَ (Pure is He, far too high from what they ascribe to Him - 39:67).

Later day scholars, taking this verse to be metaphorical, explain it by saying that having something grasped in hand and having something in the right hand is an allusion to having something under full possession and control - and it is this perfect possession and control that is meant here. And Allah, He is pure and high - He knows best.

Verses 68 - 75

وَنُفِخَ فِى الصُّوْرِ فَصَعِقَ مَنْ فِى السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَنْ فِى الْاَرْضِ اِلَّا مَنْ
شَآءَ اللّٰهُ ؕ ثُمَّ نُفِخَ فِيْهِ اُخْرٰى فَاِذَا هُمْ قِيَامٌ يَّنْظُرُوْنَ ﴿٦٨﴾ وَاَشْرَقَتِ
الْاَرْضُ بِنُوْرِ رَبِّهَا وَوُضِعَ الْكِتٰبُ وَجِایْٓءَ بِالنَّبِيّٖنَ وَالشُّهَدَآءِ
وَقُضِىَ بَيْنَهُمْ بِالْحَقِّ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٦٩﴾ وَوُفِّيَتْ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ
مَّا عَمِلَتْ وَهُوَ اَعْلَمُ بِمَا يَفْعَلُوْنَ ﴿٧٠﴾ وَسِيْقَ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْٓا اِلٰى
جَهَنَّمَ زُمَرًا ؕ حَتّٰٓى اِذَا جَآءُوْهَا فُتِحَتْ اَبْوَابُهَا وَقَالَ لَهُمْ خَزَنَتُهَآ
اَلَمْ يَاْتِكُمْ رُسُلٌ مِّنْكُمْ يَتْلُوْنَ عَلَيْكُمْ اٰيٰتِ رَبِّكُمْ وَيُنْذِرُوْنَكُمْ لِقَآءَ
يَوْمِكُمْ هٰذَا ؕ قَالُوْا بَلٰى وَلٰكِنْ حَقَّتْ كَلِمَةُ الْعَذَابِ عَلَى الْكٰفِرِيْنَ
﴿٧١﴾ قِيْلَ ادْخُلُوْٓا اَبْوَابَ جَهَنَّمَ خٰلِدِيْنَ فِيْهَا ۚ فَبِئْسَ مَثْوَى
الْمُتَكَبِّرِيْنَ ﴿٧٢﴾ وَسِيْقَ الَّذِيْنَ اتَّقَوْا رَبَّهُمْ اِلَى الْجَنَّةِ زُمَرًا ؕ حَتّٰٓى
اِذَا جَآءُوْهَا وَفُتِحَتْ اَبْوَابُهَا وَقَالَ لَهُمْ خَزَنَتُهَا سَلٰمٌ عَلَيْكُمْ طِبْتُمْ
فَادْخُلُوْهَا خٰلِدِيْنَ ﴿٧٣﴾ وَقَالُوا الْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ الَّذِىْ صَدَقَنَا وَعْدَهٗ
وَاَوْرَثَنَا الْاَرْضَ نَتَبَوَّاُ مِنَ الْجَنَّةِ حَيْثُ نَشَآءُ ۚ فَنِعْمَ اَجْرُ الْعٰمِلِيْنَ
﴿٧٤﴾ وَتَرَى الْمَلٰٓئِكَةَ حَآفِّيْنَ مِنْ حَوْلِ الْعَرْشِ يُسَبِّحُوْنَ بِحَمْدِ
رَبِّهِمْ ۚ وَقُضِىَ بَيْنَهُمْ بِالْحَقِّ وَقِيْلَ الْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿٧٥﴾

And Horn (*sūr*) will be blown, and all those in the

heavens and all those in the earth will faint, except the one whom Allah wills (otherwise). Thereafter, it will be blown once again, and suddenly they will stand up, looking around. [68] And the earth will shine with the light of its Lord, and the book (of everyone's deeds) will be placed, and the prophets and the witnesses will be brought, and matters will be decided between them with truth, and they will not be wronged. [69] And everyone will be paid in full for what he did - and He knows best as to what they do. [70] And those who disbelieved will be driven towards the Jahannam in groups, until when they reach it, its gates will be opened, and its keepers will say to them, "Did messengers from among you not come to you reciting to you the verses of your Lord, and warning you about the meeting of this day of yours?" They will say, "Yes (they did), but the word of punishment had become certain against those who disbelieved." [71] It will be said, "Enter the gates of Jahannam to live in there forever. So, how evil is the dwelling-place of the arrogant! [72] And those who used to fear their Lord will be led towards the Jannah in groups, until when they reach it, while its gates will be (already) opened (for them), and its keepers will say to them, "salamun-'alaikum (peace be on you). How good are you. So, enter it to live here forever." [73] And they will say, "alhamdulillah: Praise belongs to Allah who made His promise come true for us, and made us inherit the territory, so as we can dwell anywhere we wish in Jannah. So, excellent is the reward of those who did (good) deeds. [74] And you will see the angels ringed around the Throne proclaiming the purity of their Lord, along with His praise, and matters will stand settled between them rightfully, and it will be said: "*alḥamdulillahi-rabbil'alamīn*: Praise belongs to Allah, the Lord of the worlds." [75]

Commentary

In verse 68, it was said: فَصَعِقَ مَنْ فِى السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَنْ فِى الْاَرْضِ اِلَّا مَنْ شَآءَ اللّٰهُ : "and all those in the heavens and all those in the earth will faint, except the one whom Allah wills." The word: صَعِقَ (*sa'iqa*) literally means to swoon, faint or fall unconscious, and the sense is that they all will become unconscious first, then die, and those who had already died, their spirits will become unconscious (as in Bayān ul-Qur'ān under the commentary on Sūrah An-Naml and in Ibn Kathīr likewise).

The last part of the verse: إِلَّا مَنْ شَآءَ اللَّهُ : "except those whom Allah wills [otherwise]" needs to be explained. Included here, according to the narrations of ad-durr-ul-manthur, there are four angels - Jibra'īl, Mika'īl, Israfīl and 'Izra'īl (the angel of death) - and as in some narrations, the angels bearing the Throne are also included therein. That they have been so exempted means that the effect of the blowing of the *sūr* will not cause death to them. But, later on, they too will meet their death. And no one, except the one and single Being of *Allah subḥānahu wā ta'ālā,* will remain alive at that time. Ibn Kathīr has also opted for this view, and has said that, even out of all of them, the angel of death will be the last to die. Another verse similar to this has appeared in Sūrah An-Naml also where instead of the word: صَعِقَ (*sa'iqa*: faint), the word used is: فَزِعَ (*fazi'a*: frightened). Some details about it have been given there as well. (Ma'āriful-Qur'ān, Volume VI, please see under commentary on Sūrah An-Naml, 27:87).

In verse 69, it was said: وَجِايْٓءَ بِالنَّبِيّٖنَ وَالشُّهَدَآءِ (and the prophets and the witnesses will be brought,) It means that, at the time of reckoning on the plains of Resurrection, present there will be all prophets as well as all other witnesses. The prophets themselves will also be among the witnesses as said in the Qur'ān: جِئْنَا مِنْ كُلِّ اُمَّةٍ بِشَهِيْدٍ (We shall bring a witness from every community - An-Nisā', 4:41). And angels too will be among the witnesses, as in the Qur'ān: مَعَهَا سَآئِقٌ وَّشَهِيْدٌ (with each someone [meaning an angel] to drive and someone [meaning an angel] to bear witness - Qāf, 50:21) where the identity of the driver and the witness has been clearly established as being the angels (Tafsīr Ad-Durr-ul-Manthur). And among the witnesses, there will be the followers of the prophet of Islam as in the Qur'ān: لِتَكُوْنُوْا شُهَدَآءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ (and [so that] you become witnesses to [other] people - Al-Ḥajj, 22:78). And, for that matter, even one's own body limbs will appear as witnesses as said in the Qur'ān: تُكَلِّمُنَا اَيْدِيْهِمْ وَتَشْهَدُ اَرْجُلُهُمْ (their hands will speak to Us and their feet will bear witness - Yā Sīn, 36:65).

In verse 74, it was said: نَتَبَوَّاُ مِنَ الْجَنَّةِ حَيْثُ نَشَآءُ (we can dwell anywhere we wish in Jannah). The sense is that, apart from their own special dwelling places, the people of Jannah will be allowed to visit others there and take pleasure trips around. Ṭabaranī, Abū Nu'aym and Diya', have reported, through a chain rated as '*ḥasan*', from Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضی اللہ عنہا that someone came to the Holy Prophet ﷺ and said to him, '*yā rasūlallāh,* I

love you so much that I keep thinking of you even when I go back home and I remain uncomfortable and impatient until I return to you. But, when I remember my death and remember your death, then, it occurs to me that you will be in the higher stations of Jannah and even if I reach there somehow, it is certain that I shall be on a level much below it. My worry is: How am I going to see you?' The Holy Prophet ﷺ heard what he said, but he remained silent until came the angel, Jibra'īl with the following verse:

وَمَنْ يُّطِعِ اللّٰهَ وَالرَّسُوْلَ فَاُولٰٓئِكَ مَعَ الَّذِيْنَ اَنْعَمَ اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِمْ مِّنَ النَّبِيّٖنَ وَالصِّدِّيْقِيْنَ
وَالشُّهَدَآءِ وَالصّٰلِحِيْنَ وَحَسُنَ اُولٰٓئِكَ رَفِيْقًا

And those who obey Allah and the Messenger are with those whom Allah has blessed, namely, the prophets, the *Ṣiddiqin*,[1] the *Shuhada'*,[2] and the righteous - and what a good company they are. - an-Nisā', 4:69.

In this verse, it was clearly stated that Muslims who obey Allah and the Messenger would invariably be with the prophets and those others mentioned therein. Then, from the verse under study we also come to understand that they will be allowed to visit higher stations of Jannah. May Allah Ta'ālā, in His mercy, make us join up with them in Jannah.

Alhamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Az-Zumar
Ends here

1. Ṣiddiq, lexically means 'very truthful'. In the Islamic terminology, it normally refers to those Companions of a prophet who excel all others in their submission to Allah and His Messenger. They enjoy the highest status of piety after the Prophets, like Sayyidnā Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه. (back)

2. Shuhada (pl. of Shāhid) means the persons who sacrificed their lives in the way of Allah. The word has not been translated here by the word 'martyr' which sometimes is taken as an equivalent of Shahid, because the word 'martyr' is also applied for the persons killed in ethnic or racial wars while they may not be termed as 'Shuhada in the Islamic terminology

Sūrah Al-Mu'min

(The Believer) or

Sūrah Ghāfir

(The Forgiver)

Sūrah Al-Mu'min is Makkī, and it has 85 verses and 9 sections

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 9

حٰمٓ ﴿١﴾ تَنْزِيْلُ الْكِتٰبِ مِنَ اللّٰهِ الْعَزِيْزِ الْعَلِيْمِ ﴿٢﴾ غَافِرِ الذَّنْۢبِ
وَقَابِلِ التَّوْبِ شَدِيْدِ الْعِقَابِ ۙ ذِى الطَّوْلِ ؕ لَآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا هُوَ ؕ اِلَيْهِ
الْمَصِيْرُ ﴿٣﴾ مَا يُجَادِلُ فِيْٓ اٰيٰتِ اللّٰهِ اِلَّا الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا فَلَا يَغْرُرْكَ
تَقَلُّبُهُمْ فِى الْبِلَادِ ﴿٤﴾ كَذَّبَتْ قَبْلَهُمْ قَوْمُ نُوْحٍ وَّالْاَحْزَابُ مِنْۢ
بَعْدِهِمْ ۠ وَهَمَّتْ كُلُّ اُمَّةٍۢ بِرَسُوْلِهِمْ لِيَاْخُذُوْهُ وَجٰدَلُوْا بِالْبَاطِلِ
لِيُدْحِضُوْا بِهِ الْحَقَّ فَاَخَذْتُهُمْ ۫ فَكَيْفَ كَانَ عِقَابِ ﴿٥﴾ وَكَذٰلِكَ
حَقَّتْ كَلِمَتُ رَبِّكَ عَلَى الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْٓا اَنَّهُمْ اَصْحٰبُ النَّارِ ﴿٦﴾
اَلَّذِيْنَ يَحْمِلُوْنَ الْعَرْشَ وَمَنْ حَوْلَهٗ يُسَبِّحُوْنَ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّهِمْ
وَيُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِهٖ وَيَسْتَغْفِرُوْنَ لِلَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا ۚ رَبَّنَا وَسِعْتَ كُلَّ شَیْءٍ
رَّحْمَةً وَّعِلْمًا فَاغْفِرْ لِلَّذِيْنَ تَابُوْا وَاتَّبَعُوْا سَبِيْلَكَ وَقِهِمْ عَذَابَ

الْجَحِيمِ ﴿٧﴾ رَبَّنَا وَأَدْخِلْهُمْ جَنَّٰتِ عَدْنٍ الَّتِي وَعَدتَّهُمْ وَمَن صَلَحَ
مِنْ آبَائِهِمْ وَأَزْوَاجِهِمْ وَذُرِّيَّاتِهِمْ ۚ إِنَّكَ أَنتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿٨﴾
وَقِهِمُ السَّيِّئَاتِ ۚ وَمَن تَقِ السَّيِّئَاتِ يَوْمَئِذٍ فَقَدْ رَحِمْتَهُ ۚ وَذَٰلِكَ هُوَ
الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ ﴿٩﴾

Ḥā Mīm. [1] This is revelation of the Book from Allah, the Mighty, the All-Knowing, [2] the One who forgives sins and accepts repentance, the One who is severe in punishment, the One who is the source of all power. There is no god but He. To Him is the ultimate return (of all). [3] No one quarrels about the verses of Allah, except those who disbelieve. So, their (prosperous) movements in the cities should not deceive you. [4] Before these, the people of Nūḥ and the groups after them had rejected (the messengers). And every group intended to seize their messenger, and raised disputes on the basis of falsehood, so that they might refute the truth with it, hence I seized them. So, how was My punishment? [5] And similarly, the word of your Lord has become due against those who disbelieve, that they are the people of the Fire. [6]

Those who are bearing the Throne and those who are around it pronounce the purity of your Lord alongwith His praise, and believe in Him, and pray for the forgiveness of those who believe: "Our Lord, Your mercy and knowledge comprehends everything, so forgive those who repent and follow Your way, and save them from the punishment of the Fire. [7] And, our Lord, admit them to the eternal gardens of Jannah that You have promised for them, and (admit) those as well who did good from among their fathers and wives and children. You, only You, are the Mighty, the Wise, [8] and save them from evils (of punishment). And whomsoever you save from evils that day, it is surely because you bless him with mercy. And that is the great achievement indeed. [9]

Commentary

Sūrah Al-Mu'min: Characteristics and Merits

From here (40) to Sūrah Al-Aḥqāf (46) starts a series of seven Sūrahs that begin with the isolated letters: حٰمٓ (Ḥā Mīm). These are called: آلِ حٰمٓ

('Āl Ḥā Mīm) or حواميم (*ḥawāmīm*). Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd ﷺ said, آل حٰم ('Āl Ḥā Mīm) is: ديباج القرآن (*dibāj-ul- Qur'ān*): Dibāj, in Arabic, is the cloth of pure silk, and here it signifies embellishment. Mis'ar Ibn Kidām says, 'These are called: عرائس (*'arā'is*: brides).' Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ said, 'Every thing has an essence. The essence of the Qur'ān lies in آل حٰم ('Āl Ḥā Mīm)' or said, 'حواميم (*ḥawāmīm*).' All these reports appear in Faḍa'īl-ul-Qur'ān by the great scholar, Abū 'Ubaid Qasim Ibn Sallam.

And Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh (Ibn Mas'ūd) ﷺ said that the example of the Qur'ān is similar to that of a person who started out to look for a place where he and his family could live. Here, he finds some green open land and is pleased with it. Then, he moves ahead, and finds gardens and settling places far more verdant and growth-prone. He says, 'I was wondering about the greenery produced by rains that I saw first, but these are more wonderful'. Then, it would be said to him, 'The first all green layout is like the Qur'ān in general, and the gardens and lodges are like آل حٰم ('Al Ḥā Mīm) from out of the Qur'ān.' Therefore, Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd ﷺ said, 'As for me, when I, during the recitation of the Qur'ān, arrive at: آل حٰم ('Al Ḥā Mīm), it is as if I am enjoying myself.'

Protection against everything unwelcome

Al-Bazzār, quoting his own chains of authority in his Musnad, reports from Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ﷺ that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "A person who has recited the 'Ayah of Kursiyy and the first three verses (1-3) of Sūrah Al-Mu'min up to: إِلَيْهِ الْمَصِيرُ (ilaihil-masir: To Him is the return) early during the day, he (or she) will, on that day, remain safe from everything bad and painful.' It has also been reported by Tirmidhi, though, one of the reporting links in the chain of authority is doubtful. (Ibn Kathīr, page 69, volume 4)

Protection against an enemy

There appears a narration from Sayyidnā Muhallab Ibn Abī Ṣafrah ﷺ in Abū Dāwūd and Tirmidhī through a chain rated as 'Ṣaḥīḥ' in which he said, 'it was reported to me by a person who had himself heard the Holy Prophet ﷺ saying (on the occasion of some Jihad concerning a night vigil) that 'should you be attacked at the time of night, you recite: حٰم لَايُنْصَرُوْنَ (Ḥā Mīm la yunṣarun) which means reciting حٰم (Ḥā Mīm) and praying that the enemy does not succeed. Then there are some narrations in which this formulation appears as: حٰم لَايُنْصَرُوْا (Ḥā Mīm la yunṣaru -

without the letter: نون (nun) at the end) the outcome of which is that, 'should you say: حٰمٓ (Ḥā Mīm), the enemy will not succeed.' From this we learn that حٰمٓ (Ḥā Mīm) serves as a fortress against the enemy. (Ibn Kathīr)

A strange event

Thābit Bunanī says, 'I was with Sayyidnā Muṣ'ab Ibn Zubayr ﷺ in a certain section of the city of Kufah. I walked into a garden to make two *raka'āt* of *ṣalāh* there. Before I would start my salah, I recited the verses of Ḥā Mīm Al-Mu'min (40:1-3) up to: اِلَيهِ المصير (*ilaihil-maṣīr*: To Him is the return). Of a sudden, I saw a man in Yemeni attire astride a white mule standing behind me. This man said to me, 'when you say: غَافِرِ الذَّنْبِ (ghafiridh-dhanbi: Forgiver of sins), with it, you should pray: يَاغَافِرَ الذَّنْبِ اِغفِرلِي (*yā ghafiradh-dhanbi, ighfirli*: O Forgiver of sins, forgive me). And when you say: قَابِلِ التَّوْبِ (qabilit-tawbi: Accepter of repentance), you should pray: يَا قَابِلَ التَّوْبِ اقبَلْ تَوبَتِى (*yā qabilata-tawbi, iqbal tawbati*: O Accepter of repentance, accept my repentance). After that, when you say: شَدِيْدِ الْعِقَابِ (*shadidil-'iqābi*: Severe in punishment), you should pray: يَا شَدِيْدَ الْعِقَابِ لَا تُعَاقِبْنِى (*yā shadidal-'iqābi, la tu'aqibni*: O Allah, severe in punishment, please do not punish me). And when you say: ذِى الطَّوْلِ (*dhiṭ-ṭawli*: Source of all power), you should pray: يَا ذَا الطَّوْلِ طُلْ عَلَيَّ بِخَيْرٍ (*yā dhaṭ-ṭawli, tul 'alaiyya bikhayr*: O source of power, bestow the best on me).

Thābit Bunani says, 'After having heard this good counsel from him, when I looked back at him, there was no one there. Looking for him, I went to the gate of the garden. I asked people there if they had seen a person in Yemeni attire passing through here. Everyone said that they had not seen anyone like that.' In another narration from Thabit Bunani, it has also been said that people think this person was Sayyidnā Ilyās عليه السلام while it has not been mentioned in the other. (Ibn Kathīr)

The effect of these verses in reforming people, and a great directive of Sayyidnā 'Umar ﷺ

Ibn Kathīr has reported on the authority of Ibn Abī Ḥātim that there was a man of strong and dignified bearing among the Syrians who used to visit Sayyidnā 'Umar ﷺ. When he did not show up for a longer than usual period of time, Sayyidnā 'Umar ﷺ inquired about him. People said, *'yā amiral-mu'minīn*, please do not ask about him. He has become a drunkard. Sayyidnā 'Umar ﷺ called his scribe and dictated a letter to him in which he said:

من عمر بن الخطاب الى فلان بن فلان. سلام عليک فانی احمد اليک اللّٰه الذی لَا اله اِلاّ هو غافر الذّنب و قابل التّوب شديد العقاب ذی الطول لَا اِلٰهَ اِلاَّ هُو اِلَيْهِ الْمَصِيْرُ.

"From 'Umar son of al-Khaṭṭāb to --- son of ---. salamun 'alaik, peace on you. After that, I praise Allah before you, other than whom there is no god worthy of worship. He is the One who forgives sins and accepts repentance, the One who is severe in punishment, the One who is the source of all power. There is no god but He. To Him is the ultimate return (of all)."

Then he turned toward those around him and said, 'Let us all join in to pray for him that Allah Ta'ālā reverses his heart and accepts his repentance.' Sayyidnā 'Umar ﷺ had instructed the messenger who was to deliver his letter that he was not to hand over the letter to the person addressed until such time that he became sober, and that he was not to hand over the letter to anyone other than the person intended to receive it. So, when this person received this letter, he read it repeatedly and thoughtfully while realizing that it carried a warning of punishment against him with a concurrent promise of forgiveness for him. Then he started weeping. Finally, he stopped drinking and made such a firm taubah that he never touched it again.

When Sayyidnā 'Umar ﷺ learnt about the effective manifestation of these words, he said to people around, 'In such matters, you too should do the same. When some brother falls into some slip of conduct, think of ways to bring him back to his normal and better self. Prompt him to turn to Allah, to place his trust in Him, to rely on His mercy. Pray to Allah for him, pray that he is enabled to repent and make his taubah. And do not become an accomplice of Satan against him (that is, if you chide him or infuriate him and thereby estrange him from his religion, then, you would actually be helping the Satan). (Ibn Kathīr)

A warning

For people who work for the betterment of Allah's creation and serve in the field of tabligh and da'wah, this verse offers great guidance. Here is a person you would love to become a better person. First, you yourself pray for him. Then, use soft ways to bring him towards that betterment. Do not be aggressive towards him, for it would do no good to him, in fact, it would amount to helping the Satan, for he would push him onto more

ways of error.

Explanation of Verses

Some commentators have said that: حم (Ḥā Mīm) is the name of Allah Ta'ālā. But, in the sight of early authorities, these isolated letters (*al-ḥuruf-ul-muqatta'āt*) are all from the category of: متشابهات (*mutashabihat*: of hidden meaning). Their meanings are known to Allah Ta'ālā alone - or, that they are a secret between Allah Ta'ālā and the Holy Prophet ﷺ.

The expression: غَافِرِ الذَّنْبِ وَقَابِلِ التَّوْبِ (*ghāfiridh-dhanb*) in verse 3: غَافِرِ الذَّنْبِ literally means the one who puts a cover on sins (in the sense that they are no more seen or known by anyone), and: قَابِلِ التَّوْبِ (*qābilit-tawb*) means: He who accepts taubah or repentance. These two expressions appear separately, though the sense of both appears to be almost the same. The reason is that by saying: غَافِرِ الذَّنْبِ (*ghāfiridh-dhanb*), the purpose is to indicate that Allah Ta'ālā does already possess the standing authority and power to forgive the sin of a servant even without taubah - while forgiving those who repent is yet another attribute of Allah. (Maẓharī)

The word: طَوْل (*ṭawl*) which follows immediately in: ذِی الطَّوْلِ (*dhit-ṭawl*) literally means vastness and being need-free. Then, it could also mean power or favor. (Maẓharī)

In verse 4, it was said: مَا يُجَادِلُ فِیْٓ اٰيٰتِ اللّٰهِ اِلَّا الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا (No one quarrels about the verses of Allah, except those who disbelieve.). This verse declares quarreling in the matter of the Qur'ān an act of *kufr* (disbelief). And the Holy Prophet ﷺ has said: اِنَّ جِدَالاً فِی الْقُرْاٰنِ كُفْرٌ (Surely, quarreling (*jidāl*) in the Qur'ān is *kufr*.' (Reported by al-Baghawi, al-Baihaqī in ash-Shu'ab from Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah رضي الله عنه; and reported by Abū Dāwūd and al-Ḥākim who has rated it as 'Ṣaḥīḥ- Maẓharī)

It appears in Ḥadīth that, on a certain day, the Holy Prophet ﷺ heard two persons quarreling about some verse of the Qur'ān. He got angry, and came out with his blessed face showing the signs of anger. He said, 'communities before you were ruined because they had started quarreling in the matter of the Book of Allah.' (Reported by Muslim from 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Amr Ibn Shu'aib - Maẓharī)

This جِدَال (*jidāl*) declared as: كُفر (*kufr*) by the Qur'ān, and Ḥadīth, means throwing taunts, passing sarcastic remarks, engineering disputes over self-invented and absurd doubts, or to give such meaning of a verse of the Qur'ān as is counter to other verses of the Qur'ān and to the binding textual imperatives of Sunnah - something that amounts to alteration in the Qur'ān. Otherwise, any honest inquiry about something ambiguous or vague, or trying to find a solution of a difficult word or expression, or to mutually investigate and discuss possibilities while deducing injunctions and rulings from the text of some verse are things not included under this *jidāl,* in fact, it is an act of *thawāb* (reward) in its own place (al-Qāḍī al-Baidawi, Qurṭubī and Maẓharī).

In the last sentence of verse 4, it was said: فَلَايَغْرُرْکَ تَقَلُّبُهُمْ فِي الْبِلَادِ (So, their [prosperous] movements in the cities should not deceive you.). The *kuffar* (disbelievers) from the tribe of Quraish used to travel to Yemen during winter and to Syria in summer with their trading caravans. They were held in esteem all over Arabia because of their services to Baytullah at Makkah, therefore, they remained safe during their travels and profited from their commercial ventures. This was the backbone of their wealth and territorial power. That this state of affairs with them kept continuing despite the challenge from Islam and the Holy Prophet ﷺ was a matter of pride for them - 'Had we been the culprits in the sight of Allah, all these blessings would have been taken away from us!' This situation could have made even some Muslims easy victims of doubt. Therefore, in this verse, it was said that Allah Ta'ālā had granted them a temporary respite in His wisdom and under His expedient consideration. So, let Muslims not be deceived by this leash given to them. Once this period of respite is over, they are going to be visited by a punishment, and this territorial power of theirs is going to be taken away from them. This started from the Battle of Badr, and up to the Conquest of Makkah, the foreboding manifested itself fully and conclusively within a span of six years.

In verse 7, it was said: اَلَّذِيْنَ يَحْمِلُوْنَ الْعَرْشَ وَمَنْ حَوْلَهٗ (Those who are bearing the Throne and those who are around it). The present count of angels who bear the Throne (*'arsh*) is four and, on the day of Qiyāmah (the Day of Judgment), they will be eight, and only Allah knows the number of angels around the *'arsh*. Some Ḥadīth narrations give the number of

their rows that reaches several hundred thousands. They are called: كرّوبى (*karrubi*, [Heb. Kerubh or kerub], plural: [Eng. Cherubin, or Cherubim, Heb. Cherubim]). They are angels close to Allah. In this verse, it has been said that all these angels close to Allah pray for all believers, particularly those who repent from their sins and follow the Sharī'ah of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Either Allah Ta'ālā has appointed them to perform this task, or their nature is such that they keep praying for the good servants of Allah. Therefore, Sayyidnā Mutarrif Ibn 'Abdullāh Ibn Shikhkhir said that out of all servants of Allah, the angels of Allah are the foremost among those who wish well for believers. Firstly, they pray for them. They implore Allah to forgive them, to save them from the punishment of Jahannam and to admit them to the everlasting gardens of Jannah. Along with it, they also pray for: وَمَنْ صَلَحَ مِنْ اٰبَائِهِمْ وَاَزْوَاجِهِمْ وَذُرِّيّٰتِهِمْ (... those as well who did good from among their fathers and wives and children. - 40:8), that is, also admit anyone from among their fathers and forefathers, and their wives, and their children - who meet the criterion of goodness that makes them deserving of forgiveness, a criterion that requires that they should have departed from the mortal world while adhering to their *'imān* or faith - yes, admit them too with the same believers into the Jannah.

This tells us that one's *'imān* or faith is the basic condition of salvation (*najah*). After *'imān* come other good deeds. The relatives of Muslim believers - fathers, grandfathers or wives and children - even if they are ranked lower than them, such is the munificence of Allah Ta'ālā that He would, in deference to them, also let the relatives of a lesser rank be along with them in Jannah, so that their happiness becomes total and complete as it has been said in another verse of the Qur'ān appearing elsewhere: ... (We will join their children with them - At-Ṭur, 52:21).

Sa'īd Ibn Jubayr has said, 'When a believer goes to Jannah, he will ask about his father, son, brother and others, and would want to know where they are. He will be told that their deeds were not like yours (therefore, they will not be there). He will say, 'whatever good I did (was not for me alone), in fact, it was for me and them both.' Then, the command will come, 'admit them too into the Jannah.' (Ibn Kathīr)

After having reported this Ḥadīth narration in Tafsīr Maẓharī, the author said, 'this *'mawquf'* (a Ḥadīth mawquf or restricted tradition from

a Companion who does not connect it to the Holy Prophet ﷺ) has the same authority and force as *'marfu''* (a Ḥadīth *marfu'* is a tradition attributed to the Holy Prophet ﷺ) and is explicit on the point that 'doing good' that is held as a pre-condition for having this privilege means 'Imān' or adhering to the true faith.

Verses 10 - 12

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا يُنَادَوْنَ لَمَقْتُ اللَّهِ أَكْبَرُ مِن مَّقْتِكُمْ أَنفُسَكُمْ إِذْ تُدْعَوْنَ إِلَى الْإِيمَانِ فَتَكْفُرُونَ ﴿١٠﴾ قَالُوا رَبَّنَا أَمَتَّنَا اثْنَتَيْنِ وَأَحْيَيْتَنَا اثْنَتَيْنِ فَاعْتَرَفْنَا بِذُنُوبِنَا فَهَلْ إِلَىٰ خُرُوجٍ مِّن سَبِيلٍ ﴿١١﴾ ذَٰلِكُم بِأَنَّهُ إِذَا دُعِيَ اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ كَفَرْتُمْ ۖ وَإِن يُشْرَكْ بِهِ تُؤْمِنُوا ۚ فَالْحُكْمُ لِلَّهِ الْعَلِيِّ الْكَبِيرِ ﴿١٢﴾

Those who disbelieve will be addressed (by a voice saying): " The hatred of Allah (for you), when you were invited to the true faith and you refused, used to be greater than your hatred for yourselves (today when you are hating your own selves out of remorse). [10] **They will say, "Our Lord, You gave us death twice and You gave us life twice. Now we confess our sins. So, is there any way to come out of here?"** [11] **(The reply will be, "No.) This is because whenever Allah alone was invoked, you used to disbelieve, and if partners were associated with Him, you used to believe. Now the decision lies with Allah, the High, the Great."** [12]

Verses 13 - 22

هُوَ الَّذِي يُرِيكُمْ آيَاتِهِ وَيُنَزِّلُ لَكُم مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ رِزْقًا ۚ وَمَا يَتَذَكَّرُ إِلَّا مَن يُنِيبُ ﴿١٣﴾ فَادْعُوا اللَّهَ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْكَافِرُونَ ﴿١٤﴾ رَفِيعُ الدَّرَجَاتِ ذُو الْعَرْشِ يُلْقِي الرُّوحَ مِنْ أَمْرِهِ عَلَىٰ مَن يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ لِيُنذِرَ يَوْمَ التَّلَاقِ ﴿١٥﴾ يَوْمَ هُم بَارِزُونَ ۖ لَا يَخْفَىٰ عَلَى اللَّهِ مِنْهُمْ شَيْءٌ ۚ لِّمَنِ الْمُلْكُ الْيَوْمَ ۖ لِلَّهِ الْوَاحِدِ الْقَهَّارِ ﴿١٦﴾

اَلْيَوْمَ تُجْزٰى كُلُّ نَفْسٍ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ ؕ لَاظُلْمَ الْيَوْمَ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ سَرِيْعُ
الْحِسَابِ ﴿١٧﴾ وَاَنْذِرْهُمْ يَوْمَ الْاٰزِفَةِ اِذِ الْقُلُوْبُ لَدَى الْحَنَاجِرِ
كٰظِمِيْنَ ؕ۬ مَالِلظّٰلِمِيْنَ مِنْ حَمِيْمٍ وَّلَا شَفِيْعٍ يُّطَاعُ ﴿١٨﴾ ؕ يَعْلَمُ
خَآئِنَةَ الْاَعْيُنِ وَمَا تُخْفِى الصُّدُوْرُ ﴿١٩﴾ وَاللّٰهُ يَقْضِىْ بِالْحَقِّ ؕ
وَالَّذِيْنَ يَدْعُوْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِهٖ لَا يَقْضُوْنَ بِشَىْءٍ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ هُوَ السَّمِيْعُ
الْبَصِيْرُ ﴿٢٠ع﴾ اَوَلَمْ يَسِيْرُوْا فِى الْاَرْضِ فَيَنْظُرُوْا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ
الَّذِيْنَ كَانُوْا مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ ؕ كَانُوْا هُمْ اَشَدَّ مِنْهُمْ قُوَّةً وَّاٰثَارًا فِى الْاَرْضِ
فَاَخَذَهُمُ اللّٰهُ بِذُنُوْبِهِمْ ؕ وَمَا كَانَ لَهُمْ مِّنَ اللّٰهِ مِنْ وَّاقٍ ﴿٢١﴾ ذٰلِكَ
بِاَنَّهُمْ كَانَتْ تَّاْتِيْهِمْ رُسُلُهُمْ بِالْبَيِّنٰتِ فَكَفَرُوْا فَاَخَذَهُمُ اللّٰهُ ؕ اِنَّهٗ
قَوِىٌّ شَدِيْدُ الْعِقَابِ ﴿٢٢﴾

It is He who shows you His signs and sends down provision for you from the sky; and no one takes lesson but the one who turns to Him. [3] So, worship Allah, making your submission exclusive for Him, even though the disbelievers dislike. [14] He is High in stations, the Owner of the Throne. He sends the spirit down, under His command, on whomever He wills from among His servants, so that he warns of the Day of Encounter - [15] the day they will come in open view. Nothing about them will remain hidden from Allah: To whom belongs the kingdom today? To Allah alone, the One, the All-Dominant. [16] Today, everyone will be recompensed for what one earned. There is no injustice today. Surely, Allah is swift in reckoning. [17] And warn them of the Day of approaching horror, when hearts will jump up into the throats, (and they will be) choked. There will be neither a friend, for the unjust, nor an intercessor to be listened to. [18] He knows the treachery of the eyes and whatever is concealed by the hearts. [19] And He will give His judgment with truth. And those whom they invoke beside Him cannot judge anything. Surely, it is Allah who is Hearing, Seeing. [20] Have they not traveled through the earth and seen how was the fate of those who used to be before them? They were stronger

than these in power and in traces left on the earth, but Allah seized them because of their sins. And there was no one to save them from Allah. [21] **That was because messengers used to come to them with clear signs, but they disbelieved. Then, Allah seized them. Surely, He is Strong, severe in punishment.** [22]

Commentary

The word: دَرَجٰت (*darajāt*,translated above as 'stations') in: رَفِيْعُ الدَّرَجَاتِ (He is High in stations - 40:15) has been taken by some commentators as meaning 'attributes.' If so, the sense of the expression would be that His attributes of perfection are most exalted. Ibn Kathīr has relied on the words as they appear outwardly and has said that it refers to the most exalted 'arsh' (throne) for it comprehends all land masses and heavens and is located above them all like a roof as in Sūrah Al-Ma'ārij: مِنَ اللّٰهِ ذِى الْمَعَارِجِ تَعْرُجُ الْمَلٰٓئِكَةُ وَالرُّوْحُ اِلَيْهِ فِىْ يَوْمٍ كَانَ مِقْدَارُهٗ خَمْسِيْنَ اَلْفَ سَنَةٍ (From Allah, the Lord of the stairways to whom ascend the angels and spirit, in a day the length of which is fifty thousand years - 70:3,4).

According to some further investigation into this verse by Ibn Kathīr, it should be borne in mind that this measure of fifty thousand years is a description of the travel distance from the seventh level of the earth up to the *'arsh*, and this is what has been declared as the preferred position by a majority of earlier and later scholars. He has also said that according to many scholars, 'arsh is made of a red ruby the diameter of which is so big as would take a travel distance of fifty thousand years to cover. Similarly, its height would take an identical travel distance to cover. Then there are commentators who have said that رَفِيْعُ الدَّرَجَاتِ (*rafi'u-d-darajāt*) appears in the sense of رَافِعُ الدَّرَجَاتِ (*rāfi'u-d-darajāt*: that is, the One who elevates others in ranks), that is, Allah Ta'ālā is the one who elevates the ranks of believers who have His fear in their hearts as borne by verses of the Qur'ān, such as: نَرْفَعُ دَرَجٰتٍ مَّنْ نَّشَآءُ (We raise in ranks whom We will - Al-An'ām, 6:83) and هُمْ دَرَجٰتٌ عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ (They are of various ranks with Allah - 'Al-'Imrān, 3:163).

The word: بَارِزُوْنَ (*barizun*) in verse 16: يَوْمَهُمْ بَارِزُوْنَ لَايَخْفٰى عَلَى اللّٰهِ مِنْهُمْ (the day they will come in open view) refers to what would happen on the day of Resurrection when its land surface will be turned into a single level without any mountains, caves, trees or buildings that could obstruct the view. Therefore, everyone will be in an open expanse, open to view.

In the concluding sentence of the same verse, it was said: لِمَنِ الْمُلْكُ الْيَوْمَ (To whom belongs the kingdom today?). This statement has appeared in this verse after يَوْمَ التَّلَاقِ (a day of encounter) and يَوْمَ هُمْ بَارِزُوْنَ (the day they will come in open view) and it is obvious that 'the day of encounter' and 'the day of gathering together' will materialize after the second Horn has been blown. Similarly, the event of 'the day they will come in open view' will also materialize after the second Horn has been blown, and a new venue in the form of a level surface will be put in place, a place with no natural or man-made object obstructing the view. After that, now that this statement: لِمَنِ الْمُلْكُ الْيَوْمَ (To whom belongs the kingdom today?) has been introduced, it only shows that this statement of Allah Ta'ālā will be made after everyone has been raised again by virtue of the blowing of the second Horn. Al-Qurṭubī has presented a Ḥadīth in support with reference to Naḥḥas. This Ḥadīth has been reported by Abū Wa'il from Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd ﷺ. According to this Ḥadīth, all human beings will be assembled together on a clear surface, a surface on which no sin would have been committed by anyone. At that time, a herald will be commanded to herald: لِمَنِ الْمُلْكُ الْيَوْمَ (To whom belongs the kingdom today?). Thereupon, the entire creation, believer or disbeliever, will respond saying: لِلّٰهِ الْوَاحِدِ الْقَهَّارِ (To Allah alone, the One, the All-Dominant.). As for the believers, they will be more than pleased to say so, for this would be part of their belief. As for the disbelievers, they will confess to it sadly and helplessly.

But, some other narrations show that this statement will be made by Allah Ta'ālā Himself when the entire creation will lie annihilated after the blowing of the first Horn, and when even specially close ones, the angels - Jibra'īl, Mika'īl, Israfīl and the angel of death - will also meet death, and no one except the One Being of Allah *subḥanahu wa ta'ālā* will remain, that will be the time He will say: لِمَنِ الْمُلْكُ الْيَوْمَ (To whom belongs the kingdom today?). Since there will be no one to answer at that time, He will Himself answer: لِلّٰهِ الْوَاحِدِ الْقَهَّارِ (To Allah alone, the One, the All-Dominant.). Sage Hasan al-Basri has said: In this situation, the entity asking the question and the entity responding to it is no other but the entity of one and only Allah. Muḥammad Ibn Ka'b al-Qurāī also says this. It is supported by the Ḥadīth of Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah and Ibn 'Umar ﷺ in which it is said, 'On the Day of Judgment, Allah Ta'ālā will -

with all earth surfaces rolled up in His left hand and all heavens rolled up in His right hand - say: "انا الملک این الجبارون این المتکبرون" (I am the owner of the kingdom. Where are the tyrants? Where are the arrogant?). In Tafsir Ad-Durr-ul- Manthūr where, after reporting both narrations of this nature, it has been said that it is possible that this statement is made twice, the first being at the time of the annihilation of the existing universe following the first blowing of the Horn, and the second at the time the entire creation has been brought back to life following the second blowing of the Horn. Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānavi has said in Bayān-ul-Qur'ān that the Tafsir of the noble Qur'ān does not hinge on declaring it as made twice only, instead, it is also possible that the cited verse is mentioning the event that will come to pass after the first blowing of the Horn, but it has been referred to here (while mentioning the events after the second blowing) as a reminder of what happened before. Allah knows best.

In verse 19, it was said: يَعْلَمُ خَآئِنَةَ الْاَعْيُنِ (He knows the treachery of the eyes), in other words, eyes that betray the trust. It means the action of a person who would, secretly and surreptitiously, cast a glance over something haram and impermissible for him or her, for example, casts a glance at a non-maḥram person with sexual desire, and takes it away in the event someone was around, or casts a glance in a manner that is not noticed by others. All these things are open before Allah Ta'ālā.

Verses 23 - 46

وَلَقَدْ اَرْسَلْنَا مُوْسٰى بِاٰيٰتِنَا وَسُلْطٰنٍ مُّبِيْنٍ ﴿٢٣﴾ اِلٰى فِرْعَوْنَ وَهَامٰنَ
وَقَارُوْنَ فَقَالُوْا سٰحِرٌ كَذَّابٌ ﴿٢٤﴾ فَلَمَّا جَآءَهُمْ بِالْحَقِّ مِنْ عِنْدِنَا
قَالُوا اقْتُلُوْٓا اَبْنَآءَ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا مَعَهٗ وَاسْتَحْيُوْا نِسَآءَهُمْ ؕ وَمَا كَيْدُ
الْكٰفِرِيْنَ اِلَّا فِيْ ضَلٰلٍ ﴿٢٥﴾ وَقَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ ذَرُوْنِيْٓ اَقْتُلْ مُوْسٰى
وَلْيَدْعُ رَبَّهٗ ۚ اِنِّيْٓ اَخَافُ اَنْ يُّبَدِّلَ دِيْنَكُمْ اَوْ اَنْ يُّظْهِرَ فِي الْاَرْضِ
الْفَسَادَ ﴿٢٦﴾ وَقَالَ مُوْسٰٓى اِنِّيْ عُذْتُ بِرَبِّيْ وَرَبِّكُمْ مِّنْ كُلِّ مُتَكَبِّرٍ
لَّا يُؤْمِنُ بِيَوْمِ الْحِسَابِ ﴿٢٧﴾ وَقَالَ رَجُلٌ مُّؤْمِنٌ ۖۗ مِّنْ اٰلِ فِرْعَوْنَ

يَكْتُمُ اِيْمَانَهٗٓ اَتَقْتُلُوْنَ رَجُلاً اَنْ يَّقُوْلَ رَبِّيَ اللّٰهُ وَقَدْ جَآءَكُمْ بِالْبَيِّنٰتِ
مِنْ رَّبِّكُمْ ؕ وَاِنْ يَّكُ كَاذِبًا فَعَلَيْهِ كَذِبُهٗ ۚ وَاِنْ يَّكُ صَادِقًا يُّصِبْكُمْ
بَعْضُ الَّذِيْ يَعِدُكُمْ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَا يَهْدِيْ مَنْ هُوَ مُسْرِفٌ كَذَّابٌ ﴿٢٨﴾
يٰقَوْمِ لَكُمُ الْمُلْكُ الْيَوْمَ ظٰهِرِيْنَ فِي الْاَرْضِ ۫ فَمَنْ يَّنْصُرُنَا مِنْۢ بَاْسِ
اللّٰهِ اِنْ جَآءَنَا ؕ قَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ مَا اُرِيْكُمْ اِلَّا مَا اَرٰى وَمَا اَهْدِيْكُمْ اِلَّا
سَبِيْلَ الرَّشَادِ ﴿٢٩﴾ وَقَالَ الَّذِيْ اٰمَنَ يٰقَوْمِ اِنِّيْٓ اَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ مِّثْلَ
يَوْمِ الْاَحْزَابِ ﴿٣٠﴾ مِثْلَ دَاْبِ قَوْمِ نُوْحٍ وَّعَادٍ وَّثَمُوْدَ وَالَّذِيْنَ مِنْۢ
بَعْدِهِمْ ؕ وَمَا اللّٰهُ يُرِيْدُ ظُلْمًا لِّلْعِبَادِ ﴿٣١﴾ وَيٰقَوْمِ اِنِّيْٓ اَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ
يَوْمَ التَّنَادِ ﴿٣٢﴾ يَوْمَ تُوَلُّوْنَ مُدْبِرِيْنَ ۚ مَالَكُمْ مِّنَ اللّٰهِ مِنْ عَاصِمٍ ۚ
وَمَنْ يُّضْلِلِ اللّٰهُ فَمَالَهٗ مِنْ هَادٍ ﴿٣٣﴾ وَلَقَدْ جَآءَكُمْ يُوْسُفُ مِنْ
قَبْلُ بِالْبَيِّنٰتِ فَمَازِلْتُمْ فِيْ شَكٍّ مِّمَّا جَآءَكُمْ بِهٖ ؕ حَتّٰٓى اِذَا هَلَكَ
قُلْتُمْ لَنْ يَّبْعَثَ اللّٰهُ مِنْۢ بَعْدِهٖ رَسُوْلًا ؕ كَذٰلِكَ يُضِلُّ اللّٰهُ مَنْ
هُوَ مُسْرِفٌ مُّرْتَابُ ﴿٣٤﴾ ۚۖ الَّذِيْنَ يُجَادِلُوْنَ فِيْٓ اٰيٰتِ اللّٰهِ بِغَيْرِ سُلْطٰنٍ
اَتٰهُمْ ؕ كَبُرَ مَقْتًا عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ وَعِنْدَ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا ؕ كَذٰلِكَ يَطْبَعُ اللّٰهُ
عَلٰى كُلِّ قَلْبِ مُتَكَبِّرٍ جَبَّارٍ ﴿٣٥﴾ وَقَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ يٰهَامٰنُ ابْنِ لِيْ
صَرْحًا لَّعَلِّيْٓ اَبْلُغُ الْاَسْبَابَ ﴿٣٦﴾ اَسْبَابَ السَّمٰوٰتِ فَاَطَّلِعَ اِلٰٓى اِلٰهِ
مُوْسٰى وَاِنِّيْ لَاَظُنُّهٗ كَاذِبًا ؕ وَكَذٰلِكَ زُيِّنَ لِفِرْعَوْنَ سُوْٓءُ عَمَلِهٖ وَصُدَّ
عَنِ السَّبِيْلِ ؕ وَمَا كَيْدُ فِرْعَوْنَ اِلَّا فِيْ تَبَابٍ ﴿٣٧﴾ وَقَالَ الَّذِيْٓ اٰمَنَ
يٰقَوْمِ اتَّبِعُوْنِ اَهْدِكُمْ سَبِيْلَ الرَّشَادِ ﴿٣٨﴾ يٰقَوْمِ اِنَّمَا هٰذِهِ الْحَيٰوةُ
الدُّنْيَا مَتَاعٌ ۫ وَّاِنَّ الْاٰخِرَةَ هِيَ دَارُ الْقَرَارِ ﴿٣٩﴾ مَنْ عَمِلَ سَيِّئَةً
فَلَا يُجْزٰٓى اِلَّا مِثْلَهَا ۚ وَمَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا مِّنْ ذَكَرٍ اَوْ اُنْثٰى وَهُوَ

مُؤْمِنٌ فَأُولَٰٓئِكَ يَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ يُرْزَقُونَ فِيهَا بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ ﴿٤٠﴾
وَيٰقَوْمِ مَا لِيٓ أَدْعُوكُمْ إِلَى النَّجٰوةِ وَتَدْعُونَنِيٓ إِلَى النَّارِ ﴿٤١﴾
تَدْعُونَنِي لِأَكْفُرَ بِاللَّهِ وَأُشْرِكَ بِهِ مَا لَيْسَ لِي بِهِ عِلْمٌ وَأَنَا أَدْعُوكُمْ
إِلَى الْعَزِيزِ الْغَفَّارِ ﴿٤٢﴾ لَا جَرَمَ أَنَّمَا تَدْعُونَنِيٓ إِلَيْهِ لَيْسَ لَهُ دَعْوَةٌ
فِي الدُّنْيَا وَلَا فِي الْآخِرَةِ وَأَنَّ مَرَدَّنَا إِلَى اللَّهِ وَأَنَّ الْمُسْرِفِينَ هُمْ
أَصْحٰبُ النَّارِ ﴿٤٣﴾ فَسَتَذْكُرُونَ مَا أَقُولُ لَكُمْ وَأُفَوِّضُ أَمْرِيٓ إِلَى
اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بَصِيرٌ بِالْعِبَادِ ﴿٤٤﴾ فَوَقٰهُ اللَّهُ سَيِّـَٔاتِ مَا مَكَرُوا
وَحَاقَ بِآلِ فِرْعَوْنَ سُوٓءُ الْعَذَابِ ﴿٤٥﴾ النَّارُ يُعْرَضُونَ عَلَيْهَا غُدُوًّا
وَعَشِيًّا وَيَوْمَ تَقُومُ السَّاعَةُ أَدْخِلُوٓا آلَ فِرْعَوْنَ أَشَدَّ الْعَذَابِ
﴿٤٦﴾

And We did send Mūsā with Our signs and a manifest proof [23] to the Pharaoh and Hamān and Qarūn, but they said, "He is a sorcerer, a liar." [24] And when he brought them the truth from Us, they said, "Kill the sons of those who have accepted faith with him, and spare the lives of their women." And the plot of the disbelievers is nothing but a failure. [25] And the Pharaoh said, "Let me kill Mūsā, and let him call his Lord. I am afraid that he will change your religion or that he will cause havoc to appear in the land." [26] And Mūsā said, "I have sought protection of my Lord and your Lord from every arrogant man who does not believe in the day of reckoning." [27] And said a believing man from the House of the Pharaoh who had kept his faith secret, "Would you kill a man because he says - 'Allah is my Lord' - while he has come to you with clear signs from your Lord? And if he is a liar, then, his lie will fall back on himself, and if he is truthful, some of that (punishment) of which he warns you will afflict you. Indeed, Allah does not give guidance to anyone who is transgressor, a liar. [28] O my people, the kingdom is yours today, while you are dominant on the land. But, who is going to help us against the punishment of Allah, if it comes upon us?" Pharaoh said, " I do not give

you an opinion unless I myself believe it to be correct, and I do not direct you to anything but to the right way." [29] And said he who had believed, "I fear for you something like a day of the (disbelieving) groups (of the past) , [30] like the fate of the people of Nūḥ and 'Ad and Thamud and those who were after them - and Allah does not intend to do any injustice to His servants. [31] And O my people, I fear for you a day when people will call one another, [32] a day when you will turn back on your heels, having no one to save you from Allah - but, whomever Allah lets go astray, for him there is no one to guide. [33] And Yusuf had already come to you earlier with clear signs, but you remained in suspicion about what he brought to you - until when he died, you said, 'Allah will never send a messenger after him.' That is how Allah lets him go astray who crosses limits and lives in doubt, - [34] those who quarrel in the matter of the verses of Allah without any authority having reached them. It is terribly hateful with Allah and with those who believe. That is how Allah stamps a seal on the entire heart of an arrogant tyrant." [35] And the Fir'aun (the Pharaoh) said, "O Haman, make a tower for me, perhaps I could reach the ways- [36] - the ways to the heavens, and peek towards the God of Mūsā. And I do think that he is a liar." And that is how his evil deeds were made attractive to Fir'aun, and (how) he was held back from the way. And the evil design of the Fir'aun was (to end) in nothing but ruin. [37] And said he who had believed, "O my people, follow me, I will show you the path of guidance. [38] O my people, this life of the world is only a (momentary) benefit, while the Hereafter is, indeed, the place of permanent living. [39] The one who does something evil will not be punished but in its equal proportion, but the one who does a righteous deed, be he male or female, while he is a believer, then, such people will enter the Jannah where they will be provided with bounties beyond reckoning. [40] And O my people, what is wrong with me that I call you to salvation and you call me to the Fire? You invite me to reject my belief in Allah and ascribe to Him partners about whom I have no knowledge, while I invite you to (Him who is) the Mighty, the Most-Forgiving. [42] It is obvious that those (gods) to whom you are inviting me are not worth calling, neither in this world nor in the world to come, and that we have to return back to Allah, and that the

transgressors are indeed the people of the Fire. [43] **Soon you will remember what I am saying to you. And I entrust my matter with Allah. Surely, Allah has all (His) servants in sight."** [44] **Then Allah saved him from the evils of what they designed, and the House of the Pharaoh was encircled by an evil punishment.** [45] **It is the Fire before which they are presented morning and evening. And on the day when the Hour (of final judgment) will take place, (the order will be released,): "Admit the family of the Pharaoh into the most severe punishment."** [46]

Commentary

Frequent references were made earlier in the text to the warnings given to deniers of pure monotheism and prophethood which brought more opposition and hostility from disbelievers. Naturally, this situation made the Holy Prophet ﷺ sad. It was to comfort him that, in nearly two sections cited above, mentioned there is the story of Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام and Pharaoh. In this story, there is a lengthy dialogue between the Pharaoh, his people and a righteous elder who, despite being a scion of the House of the Pharaoh, had believed in the faith of Sayyidnā Mūsā after having seen the miracles shown at his hands - but, had kept his faith secret until that time. Once this dialogue took place, his faith stood declared automatically and conclusively.

Out of early Tafsir authorities, Muqātil, Suddiyy and Ḥasan have said that he was a cousin of the Pharaoh and was the same person who, at the time they were talking in the court of Pharaoh about killing Sayyidnā Mūsā in retaliation against the killing of the Copt, had come running from the far side of the city and apprised Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام of the danger and advised him to go out of Egypt. This event has been mentioned in Sūrah Al-Qaṣaṣ: وَجَآءَ رَجُلٌ مِّنْ اَقْصَى الْمَدِيْنَةِ يَسْعٰى (And there came a man running, from the farthest part of the city. - Al-Qaṣaṣ, 28:20)

The name of this believing member of the House of the Pharaoh has been given as Ḥabib in some sources. But, the truth of the matter is that Ḥabib is the name of the person who has been mentioned in Sūrah Yā Sīn (36:20). The name of this person is شمعان (Sham'ān). *Suhaili* considers this name as most correct. Others say that his name is Ḥizqil. Tha'labi has reported the same name from Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه.

In a Ḥadīth, the Holy Prophet ﷺ said, 'Of some صدّيقين (ṣiddiqīn: the truthful ones), there is Ḥabib *najjār* (carpenter) whose incident appears in Sūrah Yā Sīn; the other is the believer from the House of Pharaoh; the third, Abū Bakr (Sayyidnā Abū Bakr aṣ-Ṣiddiq ﷺ), and he is the foremost among them.' (Qurṭubī)

In verse 28, it was said: 'يَكْتُمُ اِيْمَانَه' (who had kept his faith secret). This tells us that a person who does not declare his *'īmān* (faith) before people, yet remains staunch in his faith by heart, then, this person is a believer. But, it stands proved from clear textual authority (of the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth) that, for *'īmān* to be acceptable, the simple certitude of the heart is not enough, instead, it is subject to the condition of a verbal confession and declaration. Unless the person concerned declares it verbally, he or she will not be regarded as a believer. However, making this verbal declaration before people publicly is not necessary. The only reason why it is needed is that unless people come to know about the person's *'īmān*, they would remain unable to interact with him or her in the same way as they do with Muslims. (Qurṭubī)

Earlier in the verse, by saying: مُؤْمِنٌ مِّنْ اٰلِ فِرْعَوْنَ (a believing man from the House of the Pharaoh), it is virtually demonstrated that the believer, in his ensuing dialogue with Pharaoh and his people, invited them toward truth and faith as well as restrained them from killing Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام.

In verse 32, it was said: يٰقَوْمِ اِنِّيْٓ اَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ يَوْمَ التَّنَادِ (O my people, I fear for you a day when people will call one another,). The last word: تناد (*tanād*) with a kasrah on the letter: دال (*dāl*) is an abbreviated form of the word: تَنَادِي (*tanādi*) which means calling each other. The day of Qiyāmah (the Day of Doom, or Judgment) was called: يَوْمُ التَّنَادِ (*yowm-ut-tanād*) for the reason that this horrendous day would be reverberating with countless calls and cries. According to a narration of Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Umar ﷺ, the Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "When comes the day of Qiyāmah, an announcer from Allah will proclaim: 'Let the adversaries of Allah stand'. It would mean people who rejected taqdir or predestination. And then, the people of Jannah will call out to the people of Jahannam, and the people of Jahannam will call out to the people of Jannah, and the people of the A'rāf (Heights) will call out to both, all saying things about themselves. And at that time, names will be announced, names of the lucky and the

unlucky, alongwith their parentage. It will be like an announcement of results indicating that such and such person named is fortunate and successful, and that the probability of any misfortune for him or her stands eliminated - and that such and such person has turned out to be unfortunate, and that the probability of any good fortune for him or her stands eliminated." (Reported by Ibn Abī Ḥātim in As-Sunnah - Maẓharī)

And it has been reported from Sayyidnā Abū Ḥāzim Al-A'raj ﷺ that he used to address his own self saying, "O A'raj, when comes the call on the day of Qiyāmah: 'Let those who committed such and such sins stand' - you would be standing with them; and when comes the call: 'Let those who committed such and such sins stand', you would be standing with them too; and when comes the call: 'Let those who committed such and such sins', you would be standing with them too - and I believe, every time a sin is announced, you would have to stand with them (because you have all sorts of sins in store with you!") - Reported by Abū Nu'aym - Maẓharī.

In verse 33, it was said: يَوْمَ تُوَلُّوْنَ مُدْبِرِيْنَ (a day when you will turn back on your heels,). In the summary of *tafsīr* from Bayān-ul-Qur'ān of Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānavi (forming a part of the original Urdu edition of Ma'āriful-Qur'ān), it has been said with reference to Imām al-Baghawi that this is a description of the state in which culprits will be taken from the locale of reckoning out to the Jahannam. The outcome is that all calls and announcements mentioned in the explanation of *'yowm-ut-tanād'* ('a day when people will call one another') would have been made and, after that, these people will be made to detour from the locale of reckoning on to their final destination towards the Jahannam.

And according to some commentators, this reflects the state that will prevail in the world at the time of the first blowing of the Horn, that is, when the Horn will be blown the first time, the earth will crack open, and they will start running here and there but there will be angels on every outlet, and there will be no way of escape. In the view of these commentators, this يَوْمَ التَّنَادِ (*yowm-ut-tanād*) too means the time of the first blowing of the Horn, for here too there will be calls and cries coming from all corners. This view finds it support from another قراءت (*qirā'ah:* rendition) of this verse reported from Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ and Ḍaḥḥāk who used to recite the words: يَوْمَ التَّنَادّ (*yowm-ut-tanād*) with a *tashdid* (double sound) on the last letter: دال (*dāl*) which is a derivation

from the infinitive: نَدّ (*nadd*) meaning to run away. Hence, according to this Tafsīr, يَوْمَ التَّنَادِ will mean 'the day of running' and the expression: تُوَلُّوْنَ مُدْبِرِيْنَ (you will turn back on your heels - 33) will become its explanation.

There is a lengthy Ḥadīth in Tafsīr Maẓharī. It has been reported from Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ﷺ with reference to Ibn Jarīr, Musnad Abū Ya'la, al-Baihaqī, Musnad 'Abd Ibn Ḥumaid and others. It mentions three soundings of the Horn on the day of Qiyāmah. The first blowing of the Horn will cause consternation, the second, unconsciousness and the third, resurrection. The sonic outburst causing consternation will make the entire creation panic, then, this very outburst will become long enough to make everyone unconscious following which everyone will die. Generally, the combination of these two sonic outbursts has been called the first blowing of the Horn for the obvious reason that a single blowing will bring forth two manifestations, first - panic, then - swoon or unconsciousness. In this Ḥadīth too, it has been mentioned that, at the time of the blowing causing consternation, people would be running around in panic: وَهُوَ الَّذِىْ يَقُوْلُ اللّٰهُ يَوْمَ التَّنَادِ (And that is what Allah says the day of myriad calls is) which tells us that, in this verse, the statement: يَوْمَ التَّنَادِ (*yowm-ut-tanād*) means people running around in panic at the time of the first blowing of the Horn. And Allah is Pure and High who knows best.

In verse 35, it was said: كَذٰلِكَ يَطْبَعُ اللّٰهُ عَلٰى كُلِّ قَلْبِ مُتَكَبِّرٍ جَبَّارٍ (That is how Allah stamps a seal on the entire heart of an arrogant tyrant), that is, the way the hearts of Pharaoh and Haman remained unaffected by the good counsel of Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام and the believer from the House of Pharaoh, similarly, Allah Ta'ālā cancels out or puts a seal on the heart of every such person who is arrogant and tyrannical (someone proud and arrogant, someone unjust and oppressive). When this happens, the effect is that the light of faith does not enter that heart, and one is rendered unable to distinguish between good and bad. In one قراءت (*qirā'ah*: rendition of the Qur'ān), the words for 'arrogant' and 'tyrant' have been identified as attributes of the heart for the reason that the heart is the reservoir of all morals and deeds. Every deed, good or bad, is born in the heart. Therefore, it has been said in Ḥadīth that there is a piece of flesh (heart) in the human body which, when it works right, it makes the whole body work right, and when it goes bad, it makes the whole body go bad.

(Qurṭubī)

The word: صَرْح (ṣarḥ) in verse 36: وَقَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ يَاهَامٰنُ ابْنِ لِيْ صَرْحًا (And the Pharaoh said, "O Haman, make a tower for me,) means a structure that rises high. An outward look at this statement suggests that the Pharaoh ordered his minister, Haman to build a structure that rises high into the sky close enough for him to go up, peek in and have a glimpse of God. If this wild thought, not imaginable even in the case of a man of very ordinary commonsense, really comes from Pharaoh, the sole master of the kingdom of Egypt, then, it is an evidence of his unbelievable folly - and if the minister carried out his orders, then, the apple did not fall far from the tree, as the king, so the courtier! Since no one expects any head of the state to go that wild in his imagination, therefore, some commentators have said that this much he too knew that, no matter how high a structure is made for him, he still cannot reach the skies (by that mode of ascent). But, he did that only to impress or confuse his people. Then, we have no sound and strong report to prove whether or not such a palatial high structure was ever raised. However, al-Qurṭubī reports that this building was constructed, but once it reached its higher levels, it collapsed.

My respected father, Maulānā Muḥammad Yāsīn, a dear disciple of Maulānā Muḥammad Ya'qūb, the first principal of the famous Darul-'Uloom of Deoband in India has reported his learned teacher saying, 'For this lofty palace to collapse, it is not necessary that it be hit by some Divine punishment. The fact is that the height of every building depends on the capability of its foundation to bear weight. No matter how deep the foundation is laid, it cannot go deeper than a certain limit. Now, when levels after levels were added to this building, it was inevitable that, once it exceeded the capability of its foundation to bear additional weight, it must collapse.' This provides another proof of the folly of Pharaoh and Haman. Allah knows best.

In verse 44, it was said: فَسَتَذْكُرُوْنَ مَآ اَقُوْلُ لَكُمْ وَاُفَوِّضُ اَمْرِيْٓ اِلَى اللّٰهِ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ بَصِيْرٌ بِالْعِبَادِ (Soon you will remember what I am saying to you. And I entrust my matter with Allah. Surely, Allah has all (His) servants in sight.). This is what the believer from the House of Pharaoh said at the end of his address to his people inviting them to accept the message of truth. Here, it was said that, should they not listen to him within that point of time,

there would come a time when the punishment would seize them, and they would remember what he had told them. But, the remembrance of that particular time will be useless. And when by virtue of this lengthy dialogue, advice and invitation, the *'īmān* or faith of this believer from the House of Pharaoh stood disclosed before these people, he realized that they might bring some harm to him, therefore, he said that he was leaving his case to rest with Allah, for He is the guardian and protector of His servants. Early tafsir authority, Muqatil says: When the people of the Pharaoh, as he had apprehended, went after him, he escaped towards the mountains and they could not catch him.

This has been mentioned in verse 45 in the following words: فَوَقٰهُ اللّٰهُ سَيِّاٰتِ مَا مَكَرُوْا وَحَاقَ بِاٰلِ فِرْعَوْنَ سُوْٓءُ الْعَذَابِ (Then Allah saved him from the evils of what they designed, and the House of the Pharaoh was encircled by an evil punishment.), that is, Allah Ta'ālā saved the believer from the harm the people of Pharaoh planned to bring to him, but they themselves were seized by a severe punishment. First of all, Allah Ta'ālā, in His mercy, saved the believer belonging to the House of Pharaoh right here in this world from the aggressive designs of the people of the Pharaoh against him, the details of which have not been mentioned in the Qur'ān. But, the words of the Qur'ān seem to say simply that the people of the Pharaoh had made many plans to hurt and kill him, and when the people of Pharaoh were drowned, Allah Ta'ālā saved this believing servant of Allah along with Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام. As for salvation in the Hereafter, it is fairly obvious.

In the last verse cited here, it was said: اَلنَّارُ يُعْرَضُوْنَ عَلَيْهَا غُدُوًّا وَّعَشِيًّا ۚ وَيَوْمَ تَقُوْمُ السَّاعَةُ ۗ اَدْخِلُوْٓا اٰلَ فِرْعَوْنَ اَشَدَّ الْعَذَابِ (It is the Fire before which they are presented morning and evening. And on the day when the Hour (of final judgment) will take place, (the order will be released,): "Admit the family of the Pharaoh into the most severe punishment."- 46). Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd رضي الله عنه explained this verse by saying, "Spirits of people from the House of Pharaoh are presented before the Jahannam in the form of black birds, twice every day, morning and evening, and by pointing out to the Jahannam, it is said to them: This is your abode." (Reported by 'Abd-ur-Razzāq and Ibn Abī Ḥātim - Maẓharī)

And according to a narration of Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Umar رضي الله عنه appearing in the two Ṣaḥīḥs of al-Bukhārī and Muslim, the Holy Prophet

ﷺ said, (the meaning of which is): "When one of you dies (and is in the universe of *barzakh*, the post-death ~ pre-resurrection state) he is shown, morning and evening, the place he is to reach after the reckoning of the Day of Judgment. And this place is shown to him everyday, and he is told that he has to reach there finally. If this person is from among the people of Jannah, then, Jannah will be shown to him as his place. And if he is from among the people of Jahannam, then, Jahannam will be shown to him as his place."

Punishment in graves

This verse is a proof of punishment in graves. Uninterrupted reports of aḥādīth and the consensus (*ijma'*) of the Muslim Ummah confirm it. This humble writer has put together all such material, along with relevant verses from the Qur'ān, in a regular treatise entitled: السبر بعذاب القبر *Aṣ-ṣabr bi'adhabi-l-qabr*. This treatise has been published in Arabic as part of Aḥkām-ul-Qur'ān.

Verses 47 - 50

وَإِذْ يَتَحَاجُّونَ فِي النَّارِ فَيَقُولُ الضُّعَفَاءُ لِلَّذِينَ اسْتَكْبَرُوا إِنَّا كُنَّا
لَكُمْ تَبَعًا فَهَلْ أَنتُم مُّغْنُونَ عَنَّا نَصِيبًا مِّنَ النَّارِ ﴿٤٧﴾ قَالَ الَّذِينَ
اسْتَكْبَرُوا إِنَّا كُلٌّ فِيهَا إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَدْ حَكَمَ بَيْنَ الْعِبَادِ ﴿٤٨﴾ وَقَالَ
الَّذِينَ فِي النَّارِ لِخَزَنَةِ جَهَنَّمَ ادْعُوا رَبَّكُمْ يُخَفِّفْ عَنَّا يَوْمًا مِّنَ
الْعَذَابِ ﴿٤٩﴾ قَالُوا أَوَلَمْ تَكُ تَأْتِيكُمْ رُسُلُكُم بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ قَالُوا بَلَىٰ
قَالُوا فَادْعُوا وَمَا دُعَاءُ الْكَافِرِينَ إِلَّا فِي ضَلَالٍ ﴿٥٠﴾

And (worth remembering is the time) when they (the infidels) will argue with each other in the Fire. So, the weak will say to those who were arrogant, "Surely, we used to be your followers, would you, then, stand for us in (suffering at least a) part of the (punishment of) Fire?" [47] **Those who were arrogant will say, "We all are in it. Allah has already passed the judgment between (His) servants.** [48] **And those in the Fire will say to the keepers of Jahannam, "Pray to your Lord to lighten the punishment for us some day."** [49] **They will say, "Had**

your messengers not been coming to you with open signs?" They will say, "Of course, (they had come)." They (the keepers) will say, "Then, you pray" - and praying of disbelievers (in the Hereafter) is no more than straying off the track. [50]

Verses 51 - 60

إِنَّا لَنَنْصُرُ رُسُلَنَا وَالَّذِينَ اٰمَنُوا فِي الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا وَيَوْمَ يَقُومُ الْاَشْهَادُ
﴿٥١﴾ يَوْمَ لَا يَنْفَعُ الظّٰلِمِينَ مَعْذِرَتُهُمْ وَلَهُمُ اللَّعْنَةُ وَلَهُمْ سُوْٓءُ الدَّارِ
﴿٥٢﴾ وَلَقَدْ اٰتَيْنَا مُوسَى الْهُدٰى وَاَوْرَثْنَا بَنِيٓ اِسْرَآءِيلَ الْكِتٰبَ
﴿٥٣﴾ هُدًى وَّذِكْرٰى لِاُولِي الْاَلْبَابِ ﴿٥٤﴾ فَاصْبِرْ اِنَّ وَعْدَ اللّٰهِ حَقٌّ
وَّاسْتَغْفِرْ لِذَنْبِكَ وَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ بِالْعَشِيِّ وَالْاِبْكَارِ ﴿٥٥﴾ اِنَّ
الَّذِينَ يُجَادِلُونَ فِيٓ اٰيٰتِ اللّٰهِ بِغَيْرِ سُلْطٰنٍ اَتٰهُمْ ۙ اِنْ فِي صُدُوْرِهِمْ
اِلَّا كِبْرٌ مَّا هُمْ بِبَالِغِيهِ ۚ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللّٰهِ ؕ اِنَّهٗ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ ﴿٥٦﴾
لَخَلْقُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ اَكْبَرُ مِنْ خَلْقِ النَّاسِ وَلٰكِنَّ اَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ
لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٥٧﴾ وَمَا يَسْتَوِي الْاَعْمٰى وَالْبَصِيرُ ۙ وَالَّذِينَ اٰمَنُوا
وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ وَلَا الْمُسِيٓءُ ؕ قَلِيلًا مَّا تَتَذَكَّرُوْنَ ﴿٥٨﴾ اِنَّ
السَّاعَةَ لَاٰتِيَةٌ لَّا رَيْبَ فِيهَا وَلٰكِنَّ اَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿٥٩﴾ وَقَالَ
رَبُّكُمُ ادْعُوْنِيٓ اَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ ؕ اِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَكْبِرُوْنَ عَنْ عِبَادَتِي
سَيَدْخُلُوْنَ جَهَنَّمَ دَاخِرِينَ ﴿٦٠﴾

Surely, We do help Our messengers and those who believe in the worldly life, as well as on the day in which witnesses will stand (to give their testimony)- [51] **a day when the apology of the unjust will bring them no benefit, and on them shall be the curse, and for them will be the evil abode.** [52] **And We gave Guidance to Mūsā, while We made the children of Isra'il inherit the Book -** [53] **as a guide and advice for people of understanding.** [54] **So, be patient -- surely the promise**

of Allah is true - and seek forgiveness for your sins, and proclaim the purity and praise of your Lord in the afternoon and at dawn. [55] **Surely, those who quarrel in the matter of the verses of Allah without any authority having reached them, there is nothing in their hearts but pride of greatness that they are not (able) to reach. So, seek refuge with Allah. Surely, He is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing.** [56] **Certainly, the creation of the heavens and the earth is greater than the creation of human beings, but most human beings do not know.** [57] **And the blind one and the sighted one are not equal, and those who believed and did good deeds and the evil ones are not (equal) either. Little you learn!** [58] **Certainly, the Hour is bound to come. There is no doubt in it, but most of the people do not believe.** [59] **And your Lord has said, "Call Me, I will respond to you. Definitely those who show arrogance against worshipping Me shall enter Jahannam, disgraced.** [60]

Commentary

In the opening statement of verse 51, it was said: إِنَّا لَنَنْصُرُ رُسُلَنَا وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا فِي الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا (Surely, We do help Our messengers and those who believe in the worldly life, 40:51). This verse carries the promise of Allah Ta'ālā that He would keep helping His messengers and believers, both in the present world and in the Hereafter. It is obvious that this help is intended to be against adversaries and enemies. That it so happened in the case of most prophets عليهم السلام, peace be on them all, is clear enough. But, there were prophets عليهم السلام, such as, Sayyidnā Yaḥyā, Zakariyyā and Shu'aib عليهم السلام, who were either martyred by enemies or had to abandon their home country and migrate to some other place - as was the case with Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام and the last of the prophets, Sayyidnā Muḥammad al-Muṣṭafa ﷺ. There may be some doubt about that.

Ibn Kathīr has, with reference to Ibn Jarīr, answered this possible doubt by saying that, in this verse, نصرت (*nuṣrah*: help) means: انتصار (*intiṣār*: victory) or subduing of the enemy in retaliation - whether it happens at their hands while they are alive, or after their death. This meaning applies to all prophets and believers without any exception. History bears witness as to how those who killed their prophets عليهم السلام were later on subjected to terrible punishments and the disgrace that followed. Upon those who killed Sayyidnā Yaḥyā, Zakariyyā and Shu'aib عليهم السلام, their enemies were set who showed no mercy while disgracing

and killing them. As for Namrūd (Nimrod), terrible was the punishment that overtook him. And Allah Ta'ālā set the power of Byzantine against the enemies of Sayyidnā 'Isa عليه السلام that defeated and disgraced them. And to him Allah Ta'ālā will give ascendancy over his enemies close to the last day of al-Qiyāmah. As for the enemies of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, Allah Ta'ālā had them stand subdued at the hands of Muslims themselves. Their arrogant chiefs were killed. Some were taken prisoners. The rest were rounded up at the time of the conquest of Makkah, but the Holy Prophet ﷺ let them have their freedom. His message spread all over. The faith prevailed. The state of Islam stood established on the entire Arabian Peninsula within the lifetime of the Holy Prophet ﷺ.

In the later part of verse 51, it was said: يَوْمَ يَقُوْمُ الْاَشْهَادُ (as well as on the day in which witnesses will stand [to give their testimony]. It means the day of Qiyāmah (Doomsday). Once they are there, Divine help for prophets and believers will show itself specially.

In verse 56, it was said: اِنْ فِيْ صُدُوْرِهِمْ اِلَّا كِبْرٌ مَّاهُمْ بِبَالِغِيْهِ (there is nothing in their hearts but pride of greatness that they are not [able] to reach). It means that people who quarrel in the matter of the verses of Allah without having any valid argument really look forward to rejecting this faith simply because their hearts are filled with pride and arrogance. They would like to stay ahead in the game and are so dim-witted that they have taken for granted that they have this position of strength as a result of their staunch adherence to their faith, and if they were to surrender this stance by becoming Muslims, they will be left without any power and territory of their own. The Qur'ān said: مَاهُمْ بِبَالِغِيْهِ (they are not [able] to reach), that is, these people will never reach the goals of their assumed pride, greatness and state power without embracing Islam. However, had they embraced Islam, honor and greatness would have followed in their footsteps. (Qurṭubī)

The reality of *du'ā'* (supplication) and its merits, levels and conditions of acceptance

In the last verse cited in this unit, it was said:

وَقَالَ رَبُّكُمُ ادْعُوْنِيْٓ اَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ ط اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ يَسْتَكْبِرُوْنَ عَنْ عِبَادَتِيْ سَيَدْخُلُوْنَ جَهَنَّمَ دَاخِرِيْنَ

And your Lord has said, "Call Me, I will respond to you.

Definitely those who show arrogance against worshipping Me shall enter Jahannam, disgraced. - 40:60.

Literally, *du'ā'* means to call, and it is frequently used to call for something needed. On occasions, the *dhikr* of Allah (acts devoted to His remembrance) is also referred to as *du'ā'*. This verse confers a special honor on the large community of the followers of the Holy Prophet ﷺ when they were ordered to make *du'ā'* with the assurance that it would be answered. And whoever does not make a prayer has been warned of punishment.

Qatādah reports from Ka'b Aḥbār that earlier this used to be peculiar to prophets, as they were the ones who were ordered by Allah Ta'ālā that they should make *du'ā'* and He would answer. Now, it is the distinction of the followers of the Holy Prophet ﷺ (popularly identified as Ummah Muḥammadiyyah) that this order was universalized for his entire Ummah. (Ibn Kathīr)

Explaining this verse, Sayyidnā Nu'mān Ibn Bashīr رضي الله عنه narrated a Ḥadīth that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said: إِنَّ الدُّعَاءَ هُوالعِبَادة (Surely, prayer is worship on its own) and then supported it by reciting this verse: إِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ يَسْتَكْبِرُوْنَ عَنْ عِبَادَتِيْ (Definitely those who show arrogance against worshipping Me shall enter Jahannam, disgraced.) (reported by Imām Aḥmad, Tirmidhī, Nasā'ī, Abū Dāwūd and others - Ibn Kathīr)

It appears in Tafsir Maẓharī that, if looked at under the rules of Arabic diction (confining of the predicate to the subject), the Ḥadīth: إِنَّ الدُّعَاءَ هُوالعِبَادة, could mean: '*du'ā'* is the very name of '*'ibādah*' or worship, that is, every *du'ā'* is but *'ibādah*. Then, by reversing the same rule (confining the subject to the predicate), it could also mean that every act of *'ibādah* is itself nothing but a *du'ā'*. Both probabilities exist here. And at this place, the meaning is that *du'ā'* (prayer, supplication) and *'ibādah* (worship, devotion) are, though separate from each other in terms of the literal sense, yet in terms of substantiation, they are unified, as every *du'ā'* is *'ibādah* and every *'ibādah* is *du'ā'*. The reason is that *'ibādah* is the name of the attitude of showing one's utter modesty and abasement before someone, and it is all too obvious that showing one's utter helplessness before someone and extending one's hand before him with the beggar's bowl is a matter of great disgrace - which is the very sense of

'ibādah. Similarly, the outcome of every *'ibādah* is also to ask Allah Ta'ālā for forgiveness and Jannah and that He blesses us with a perfect state of well being in this world and in the world to come. Therefore, it appears in a Ḥadīth qudsī (- a Ḥadīth in which the Holy Prophet ﷺ conveys a saying from Allah that is not included in the Qur'ān) that Allah Ta'ālā said: "One who is so engrossed in remembering Me that he does not have even the time to ask for what he needs, I shall give him more than those who ask (by fulfilling his needs without the asking)" (reported by al-Jazri in An-Nihayah) and in a narration appearing in Tirmidhi and Muslim, the words are: من شغله القران عن ذکری ومسئلتی اعطیته افضل ما اعطی السائلین ("One who is so engrossed in the recitation of the Qur'ān that he does not have even the time to ask for what he needs, I shall give him even more than what those who ask ever get"). This tells us that every *'ibādah* brings the same benefit as is the benefit of *du'ā'*.

And in the Ḥadīth of 'Arafat, it appears that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "In 'Arafāt, my *du'ā'* and the *du'ā'* of prophets before me is (the saying of): لَآ اِلٰهَ اِلاَّ اللّٰهُ وَحْدَهٗ لَا شَرِيْکَ لَهٗ لَهُ الْمُلْکُ وَلَهُ الْحَمْدُ وَهُوَ عَلٰی کُلِّ شَیْءٍ قَدِيْرٌ (*lā ilaha il-lal-lahu wahdahu la sharika lahu lahul-mulku wa lahul-hamdu wa huwa 'ala kulli shai'in qadir:* There is no god but Allah who is one. No one shares His godhead . To Him belongs the kingdom and to Him belongs all praise, and He is powerful over everything) (reported by Ibn Abī Shaibah - Maẓharī).

Here, عِبَادَة (*'ibādah*: worship) and ذِكْرُاللّٰه (*dhikrullāh*: the *dhikr* or remembrance of Allah) has been called: دُعَا (*du'ā'*: prayer, supplication).

In this verse under study, those who abandon *du'ā'* in the sense of *'ibādah* the warning of Jahannam given to them is in the eventuality of being too proud, that is, a person who, in his pride, considers himself in no need of making a *du'ā'* and actually abandons it, then, this is a sign of kufr (open infidelity), therefore, the warning of Jahannam became due against him. Otherwise, making of *du'ā'*s, prayers and supplications as such is not fard (obligatory) or wajib (necessary). Leaving it off brings no sin. However, by a consensus of 'ulama', doing so is mustahabb (recommended) and is: افضل (*afḍal*: better, meritworthy) (Maẓharī) and in accordance with clarifications in *aḥādīth*, it is a source of many a *barakah* (blessing)

Merits of du'ā'

HADITH: The Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "There is nothing more deserving of regard by Allah Ta'ālā than *du'ā'*" - Tirmidhī, Ibn Mājah and Hakim from Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ﷺ.

HADITH: The Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "*du'ā'* is the essence of *'ibādah*" - Tirmidhi from Sayyidnā Anas Ibn Mālik ﷺ.

HADITH: The Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "Ask Allah Ta'ālā of His grace because Allah Ta'ālā likes being asked, and it is a great act of *'ibādah* that one waits for ease while in hardship" - Tirmidhī from Sayyidnā Ibn Mas'ūd ﷺ.

HADITH: The Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "Verily, one who does not pray to Allah in his needs, He becomes angry with him" - Tirmidhī from Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ﷺ, Ibn Ḥibbān and Ḥākim.

In Tafsīr Maẓharī, after having reported all these narrations, it has been said that the warning of Divine wrath on a person who does not make a *du'ā'* is applicable only when this abstention from asking is based on arrogance, and on taking oneself to be need free, as it stands proved from the words of this verse: إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ (Definitely those who show arrogance against worshipping Me shall enter Jahannam, disgraced. 40:60).

HADITH: The Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "Do not be weary of *du'ā'*, for nobody dies of making *du'ā'*" - Ibn Ḥibbān and Ḥākim from Sayyidnā Anas Ibn Mālik ﷺ.

HADITH: The Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "*du'ā'* is a weapon of the believer, a pillar of the faith, and the light of the heavens and the earth" - Ḥākim in al-Mustadrak from Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ﷺ.

HADITH: The Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "If the gates of *du'ā'* are opened for someone (actually) the doors of mercy are opened for him, and no *du'ā'* made before Allah Ta'ālā is appreciated more than that in which one asks of 'afiyah (well-being) from Him" - Tirmidhī and Ḥākim from Sayyidnā Ibn 'Umar ﷺ.

The word: عَافِيَة (*'afiyah*) appearing in the Ḥadīth mentioned immediately earlier is a very comprehensive word (usually rendered in

English as 'well-being' meaning a state of being healthy and happy, though somewhat outdated in contemporary usage). Apart from a good life, it includes other things like security from unwelcome happenings, trials and calamities as well as a satisfactory fulfillment of all needs in life.

Ruling:

Making *du'ā'* for committing a sin or for severance of blood relationships is *ḥarām* (forbidden) - and, for that matter, such a *du'ā'* does not get to be accepted with Allah either - as in a Ḥadīth from Sayyidnā Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī ﷺ.

Du'ā' and the promise of acceptance

In this verse, it has been promised that the *du'ā'* a servant makes is accepted. But, on occasions, one also sees that a *du'ā'* was made and it was not accepted. The answer to this appears in a Ḥadīth of Sayyidnā Abū Sa'ī al-Khudrī ﷺ where the Holy Prophet ﷺ has been reported to have said, "Whatever a Muslim prays for before Allah, He would let him have it - subject to the condition that the *du'ā'* made was not for something sinful or for the severance of relationships that Allah has enjoined to be kept intact. As for the acceptance of *du'ā'*, it takes one of the three forms given here: (1) That one gets exactly what one asked for. (2) That in lieu of what one wanted to have, one was given a certain return or reward of the Hereafter. (3) That one did not, though, get what one wanted, but some hardship or calamity that was due to fall on one stood removed. (Musnad Aḥmad - Maẓharī)

Conditions of the acceptance of *du'ā'*

As for the present verse, it obviously seems to have no condition, almost to the extent that even being a Muslim is not a condition of *du'ā'*. Allah Ta'ālā accepts the *du'ā'* of a kafir (disbeliever) as well in this world to the extent that the *du'ā'* of Iblis to be allowed to live until the last day of Qiyāmah was accepted. For *du'ā'*, there is no condition of time, nor is there any condition that one must be with taharah (state of purity from pollutants) or wudu (ablution). But, there are trustworthy *aḥādīth* that identify a few things that preclude the chances of its acceptance. One must abstain from these. It appears in a Ḥadīth from Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ﷺ that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "...a man having been on a long journey is all disheveled and dust-coated and he stretches his hands upwards for *du'ā'* (saying): 'O my Lord! O my Lord!' while his food is

haram (unlawful), his drink: *ḥarām*, his dress: *ḥarām*, and he himself was brought up on the haram - how then, could his *du'ā'* become worth accepting?" (Reported by Muslim)

Similarly, if we were to say the words of *du'ā'* negligently, heedlessly, without paying any attention, the Ḥadīth says something about that too - that such a *du'ā'* is also not accepted. (Tirmidhī from Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah رضي الله عنه)

Verses 61 - 68

اَللّٰهُ الَّذِىْ جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الَّيْلَ لِتَسْكُنُوْا فِيْهِ وَالنَّهَارَ مُبْصِرًا ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ
لَذُوْ فَضْلٍ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَلٰكِنَّ اَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَشْكُرُوْنَ ﴿٦١﴾ ذٰلِكُمُ
اللّٰهُ رَبُّكُمْ خَالِقُ كُلِّ شَىْءٍ ۘ لَاۤ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا هُوَ ۫ فَاَنّٰى تُؤْفَكُوْنَ ﴿٦٢﴾
كَذٰلِكَ يُؤْفَكُ الَّذِيْنَ كَانُوْا بِاٰيٰتِ اللّٰهِ يَجْحَدُوْنَ ﴿٦٣﴾ اَللّٰهُ الَّذِىْ
جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْاَرْضَ قَرَارًا وَّالسَّمَآءَ بِنَآءً وَّصَوَّرَكُمْ فَاَحْسَنَ صُوَرَكُمْ
وَرَزَقَكُمْ مِّنَ الطَّيِّبٰتِ ؕ ذٰلِكُمُ اللّٰهُ رَبُّكُمْ ۚ فَتَبٰرَكَ اللّٰهُ رَبُّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ
﴿٦٤﴾ هُوَ الْحَىُّ لَاۤ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا هُوَ فَادْعُوْهُ مُخْلِصِيْنَ لَهُ الدِّيْنَ ؕ اَلْحَمْدُ
لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿٦٥﴾ قُلْ اِنِّىْ نُهِيْتُ اَنْ اَعْبُدَ الَّذِيْنَ تَدْعُوْنَ مِنْ
دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ لَمَّا جَآءَنِىَ الْبَيِّنٰتُ مِنْ رَّبِّىْ ۫ وَاُمِرْتُ اَنْ اُسْلِمَ لِرَبِّ
الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿٦٦﴾ هُوَ الَّذِىْ خَلَقَكُمْ مِّنْ تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ نُّطْفَةٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ
عَلَقَةٍ ثُمَّ يُخْرِجُكُمْ طِفْلًا ثُمَّ لِتَبْلُغُوْۤا اَشُدَّكُمْ ثُمَّ لِتَكُوْنُوْا شُيُوْخًا ۚ
وَمِنْكُمْ مَّنْ يُّتَوَفّٰى مِنْ قَبْلُ وَلِتَبْلُغُوْۤا اَجَلًا مُّسَمًّى وَّلَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُوْنَ
﴿٦٧﴾ هُوَ الَّذِىْ يُحْىٖ وَيُمِيْتُ ۚ فَاِذَا قَضٰۤى اَمْرًا فَاِنَّمَا يَقُوْلُ لَهٗ كُنْ
فَيَكُوْنُ ﴿٦٨﴾

Allah is the One who made for you the night, so that you may have rest in it, and the day to let you see. Surely, Allah is most kind to the people, but most of the

people do not offer gratitude. [61] This is Allah, your Lord, the Creator of everything. There is no god but He. Then, from where are you being reversed (by your selfish desires)? [62] Similarly reversed were those who used to deny Our verses. [63] Allah is the One who made, for you the earth a place to live, and the sky a roof; and shaped you, and made your shapes so good - and provided you with a lot of good things. That is Allah, your Lord. So, Glorious is Allah, the Lord of the worlds. [64] He is Ever-living. There is no god but He. So worship Him making your submission exclusive for Him. All praise belongs to Allah, the Lord of all the worlds. [65]

Say, "I have been ordered not to worship those whom you invoke beside Allah when clear signs from my Lord have (already) come to me, and I have been ordered that I submit to the Lord of the worlds." [66] He is the One who created you from dust, then from a drop of semen, then from a clot. After that, He takes you out as an infant. Then, (He makes you grow) so that you reach your full maturity, and, thereafter, become old - and some of you die earlier - and so that you reach the appointed term, and so that you understand. [67] He is the One who gives life and brings death, and when He decides to do something, He only says to it: "Be" and it comes to be. [68]

Commentary

In the verses cited above, after having presented a few manifestations of Allah's blessings and His perfect power, an invitation to belief in the Oneness of Allah has been extended.

In the first verse (61), it was said: جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الَّيْلَ لِتَسْكُنُوْا فِيْهِ وَالنَّهَارَ مُبْصِرًا (Allah is the One who made for you the night, so that you may have rest in it, and the day to let you see.). Just imagine how great a blessing it is that all human beings, even animals, have been naturally tuned to a set time for sleep, and that this time has been, in a manner of saying, virtually switched off in perfect synchronization with the need to sleep. In fact, it was made the part of everyone's psyche that this is the time, the time of night, that would bring a sound sleep. Otherwise, had sleep been in one's own control and had everyone been making one's own program to sleep at different hours, as he or she does to set a timetable for business or personal preferences, it would have left all sleepers deprived of the bliss of

sleep, nor would it have been convenient for those awake to set their own hours of work right. The reason is that human needs are inter-related. Had sleeping hours been different, jobs of the awake connected with the sleeping would have gone topsy-turvy, and the jobs of the sleeping connected with the awake would have fared no better. Also, if only human beings had a set time for sleep - with wild beasts and animals sleeping at some other time - even then, the system of human engagement with work would have gone haywire.

In verse 64, it was said: وَصَوَّرَكُمْ فَأَحْسَنَ صُوَرَكُمْ (and shaped you, and made your shapes so good -). Allah Ta'ālā has blessed the human person with the most distinct, superior and better-balanced form and shape out of all animals. He was given reason. He was given such hands and feet that he could get together materials to make things for his needs and comfort. Then, his eating and drinking is different, rather far distinct from common animals. They eat or graze or drink directly with their mouth. He uses hands. Common animals eat singles. Some eat meat, others eat grass or leaves, that too in singles. Contrary to that, man eats by combining different things like meat, vegetables, spices, herbs and fruits. He eats by making his food taste good. His culinary creativity knows no bounds when he would take a single fruit from nature, and turn it into all sorts of delicious eatables like pies, fruit cakes, jams, preserves and chutneys. فتبارک اللہ احسن الخالقین (Blessed is Allah, the Best Creator).

Verses 69 - 78

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ يُجَادِلُونَ فِي آيَاتِ اللَّهِ ۚ أَنَّىٰ يُصْرَفُونَ ﴿٦٩﴾
الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِالْكِتَابِ وَبِمَا أَرْسَلْنَا بِهِ رُسُلَنَا ۖ فَسَوْفَ يَعْلَمُونَ
﴿٧٠﴾ إِذِ الْأَغْلَالُ فِي أَعْنَاقِهِمْ وَالسَّلَاسِلُ ۚ يُسْحَبُونَ ﴿٧١﴾ فِي
الْحَمِيمِ ۙ ثُمَّ فِي النَّارِ يُسْجَرُونَ ﴿٧٢﴾ ثُمَّ قِيلَ لَهُمْ أَيْنَ مَا كُنْتُمْ
تُشْرِكُونَ ﴿٧٣﴾ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ ۖ قَالُوا ضَلُّوا عَنَّا بَلْ لَمْ نَكُنْ نَدْعُوا
مِنْ قَبْلُ شَيْئًا ۚ كَذَٰلِكَ يُضِلُّ اللَّهُ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٧٤﴾ ذَٰلِكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ
تَفْرَحُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ وَبِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَمْرَحُونَ ﴿٧٥﴾ ادْخُلُوا

أَبْوَابَ جَهَنَّمَ خٰلِدِيْنَ فِيْهَا ۚ فَبِئْسَ مَثْوَى الْمُتَكَبِّرِيْنَ ﴿٧٦﴾ فَاصْبِرْ
اِنَّ وَعْدَ اللّٰهِ حَقٌّ ۚ فَاِمَّا نُرِيَنَّكَ بَعْضَ الَّذِىْ نَعِدُهُمْ اَوْ نَتَوَفَّيَنَّكَ فَاِلَيْنَا
يُرْجَعُوْنَ ﴿٧٧﴾ وَلَقَدْ اَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلًا مِّنْ قَبْلِكَ مِنْهُمْ مَّنْ قَصَصْنَا
عَلَيْكَ وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ لَّمْ نَقْصُصْ عَلَيْكَ ؕ وَمَا كَانَ لِرَسُوْلٍ اَنْ يَّاْتِىَ
بِاٰيَةٍ اِلَّا بِاِذْنِ اللّٰهِ ۚ فَاِذَا جَآءَ اَمْرُ اللّٰهِ قُضِىَ بِالْحَقِّ وَخَسِرَ هُنَالِكَ
الْمُبْطِلُوْنَ ﴿٧٨﴾

Have you not seen those who quarrel in the matter of the verses of Allah? From where are they being turned away (by their selfish desires?) [69] - those who rejected the Book and what We sent with Our messengers. So, they will soon come to know. [70] - when shackles will be round their necks, and chains. They will be dragged [71] into the hot water after which they will be thrown in the Fire as a fuel. [72] Then, it will be said to them, "Where are those whom you used to associate (in worship) [73] beside Allah?" They will say, "They are lost to us, rather, we used to invoke nothing at all. This is how Allah makes disbelievers get lost. [74] (It will be said to them,) "This is because you used to rejoice on the earth wrongfully, and because you used to show arrogance. [75] Enter the gates of Jahannam to live in it forever. So, how evil is the abode of the arrogant. [76]

Therefore, be patient. Surely, the promise of Allah is true. Then, whether We show you (in your life) a part of the promise We are making to them, or make you die (before they are punished), in any case they have to be returned to Us. [77] And We had sent messengers before you. Among them there are those whose history We have narrated to you, and of them there are those whose history We did not narrate to you. And it is not up to a messenger that he could come up with a Sign without the permission of Allah. So, when the command of Allah will come, matters will stand decided justly, and on that occasion all adherents of falsehood will turn into losers. [78]

Commentary

In verses 71 and 72, it was said: يُسْحَبُوْنَ فِى الْحَمِيْمِ ثُمَّ فِى النَّارِ يُسْجَرُوْنَ (They

will be dragged [71] into the hot water after which they will be thrown in the Fire as a fuel.). The word: حَمِيم (*al-ḥamīm*) is boiling hot water. The verse seems to suggest that the people of Jahannam will first be put into the hamim, then, into the jahim, that is, the Jahannam. Again, it also seems to suggest that the hamim is somewhere outside the Jahannam. The verse: ثُمَّ إِنَّ مَرْجِعَهُمْ لَا إِلَى الْجَحِيمِ (Then, their return is but to the Fire - Aṣ-Ṣaffāt, 37:68) also appears to be suggesting that the hamim is located somewhere outside the Jahannam. The people of Jahannam will be brought here to drink its water, and will then be returned to Jahannam. Then there are some verses of the Qur'ān that suggest that the hamim too is within the jahim or Jahannam as in: هٰذِهٖ جَهَنَّمُ الَّتِىْ يُكَذِّبُ بِهَا الْمُجْرِمُوْنَ يَطُوْفُوْنَ بَيْنَهَا وَبَيْنَ حَمِيْمٍ اٰنٍ (This is the Jahannam (Hell) that the guilty people deny. They will circle around between it and between hot, boiling water - Ar-Raḥmān, 55:43,44). Here too, it is explicitly said that the hamim is also within the Jahannam.

A little deliberation shows that there is no contradiction between these two things. There will be many strata or sections of Jahannam itself serving as venues of many kinds of punishment. One of these could be that of hamim which could as well be called as being outside the Jahannam because of its separate and distinct location, and since this is also a section of Jahannam itself, therefore, it could also be called the Jahannam. Ibn Kathīr has said that the people of Jahannam, shackled in chains, will sometime be dragged into the hamim and at others, in Jahannam.

In verse 74, it was said: قَالُوْا ضَلُّوْ عَنَّا (They will say, "They are lost to us,....), that is, once they reach Jahannam, the disbelievers will say that all those idols and satans they used to worship have disappeared in the sense that they do not see them around, though, they might as well be lying somewhere in a corner of Jahannam, as their being in Jahannam stands proved from other verses of the Qur'ān, for instance: اِنَّكُمْ وَمَا تَعْبُدُوْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ حَصَبُ جَهَنَّمَ (Surely, you and whatever you worship other than Allah are the fuel for Jahannam - Al-Anbiyā', 21:98)

The word: تَفْرَحُوْنَ (*tafraḥun*) in verse 75: بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَفْرَحُوْنَ فِى الْاَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ وَبِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَمْرَحُوْنَ (This is because you used to rejoice on the earth wrongfully, and because you used to show arrogance.) has been derived from: فَرَح (*faraḥ*) which means to be happy while the word: تَمْرَحُوْنَ (*tamraḥun*) is

from: مَرَح (*marah*) which means to exult unduly or to trample over the rights of others by priding on one's wealth and power. Hence, this kind of marah or undue exultation is absolutely blameworthy and *ḥarām* (unlawful). As for *faraḥ* or mirth, it can be explained by saying that seeking enjoyment out of sinfulness under the intoxication of wealth coupled with the absence of any thought of there being a God is certainly *ḥarām* and impermissible. Meant in this verse is this kind of *faraḥ* - as it also appears in the story of Qārūn (Korah) in the same sense: لَاتَفْرَحْ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَايُحِبُّ الْفَرِحِيْنَ ("Do not exult. Surely, Allah does not like the exultant.- al-Qaṣaṣ, 28:76). There is another degree of *faraḥ* - that one takes good things of life as blessings from Allah Ta'ālā, and expresses his or her joy on having these - this is permissible, in fact, is recommended (*mustaḥabb*), and desirable. It is about such *faraḥ* that the Qur'ān has said: فَبِذٰلِكَ فَلْيَفْرَحُوْا (with these they should rejoice - Yūnus, 10:58). As for *maraḥ*, it is a cause of punishment absolutely, without any restriction. Therefore, no qualifying words were added to it. But, in the case of *faraḥ*, the words: بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ (*bi ghayril-ḥaqq*: wrongfully) are added. It was thus pointed out that jubilating over the undue and the impermissible was forbidden (*ḥarām*) while being pleased with blessings that are rightful and permissible as an expression of gratitude was an act of *'ibādah* (worship of Allah) and *thawāb* (reward from Him).

In verse 77, it was said: فَاصْبِرْ اِنَّ وَعْدَ اللّٰهِ حَقٌّ فَاِمَّا نُرِيَنَّكَ (Therefore, be patient. Surely, the promise of Allah is true. Then, whether We show you [in your life] a part of the promise We are making to them, or make you die [before they are punished], in any case they have to be returned to Us). From this verse it appears that the Holy Prophet ﷺ was hopefully waiting for the disbelievers to be punished. Therefore, it was to comfort him that he was asked to be somewhat patient about it. The promise of Allah for them, that they will be punished, will certainly be fulfilled - may be during his lifetime, or after he has departed from the mortal world. Waiting for the disbelievers to be punished apparently seems contrary to the dignity of one who was sent with universal mercy. But, here the matter is different. When the purpose of punishing criminals is to bring comfort to innocent believers who were oppressed, then, the punishment of criminals is not contrary to compassion and mercy. Nobody regards the punishment given to a criminal against the dictate of mercy.

Verses 79 - 85

اَللّٰهُ الَّذِىْ جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْاَنْعَامَ لِتَرْكَبُوْا مِنْهَا وَمِنْهَا تَاْكُلُوْنَ ﴿٧٩﴾
وَلَكُمْ فِيْهَا مَنَافِعُ وَلِتَبْلُغُوْا عَلَيْهَا حَاجَةً فِىْ صُدُوْرِكُمْ وَعَلَيْهَا
وَعَلَى الْفُلْكِ تُحْمَلُوْنَ ﴿٨٠﴾ وَيُرِيْكُمْ اٰيٰتِهٖ ۖ فَاَىَّ اٰيٰتِ اللّٰهِ
تُنْكِرُوْنَ ﴿٨١﴾ اَفَلَمْ يَسِيْرُوْا فِى الْاَرْضِ فَيَنْظُرُوْا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ
الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ ۭ كَانُوْٓا اَكْثَرَ مِنْهُمْ وَاَشَدَّ قُوَّةً وَّ اٰثَارًا فِى الْاَرْضِ
فَمَآ اَغْنٰى عَنْهُمْ مَّا كَانُوْا يَكْسِبُوْنَ ﴿٨٢﴾ فَلَمَّا جَآءَتْهُمْ رُسُلُهُمْ
بِالْبَيِّنٰتِ فَرِحُوْا بِمَا عِنْدَهُمْ مِّنَ الْعِلْمِ وَحَاقَ بِهِمْ مَّا كَانُوْا بِهٖ
يَسْتَهْزِءُوْنَ ﴿٨٣﴾ فَلَمَّا رَاَوْا بَاْسَنَا قَالُوْٓا اٰمَنَّا بِاللّٰهِ وَحْدَهٗ وَكَفَرْنَا
بِمَا كُنَّا بِهٖ مُشْرِكِيْنَ ﴿٨٤﴾ فَلَمْ يَكُ يَنْفَعُهُمْ اِيْمَانُهُمْ لَمَّا رَاَوْا بَاْسَنَا ۭ
سُنَّتَ اللّٰهِ الَّتِىْ قَدْ خَلَتْ فِىْ عِبَادِهٖ ۚ وَخَسِرَ هُنَالِكَ الْكٰفِرُوْنَ
ع
﴿٨٥﴾

Allah is the One who made for you the cattle, so that you may ride some of them, and of them you eat. [79] and for you there are (other) benefits in them and so that, (riding) on them, you meet any need you have in your hearts; and on them and on boats you are carried. [80] And He shows you His signs. Then, which of the signs of Allah would you (still) deny? [81] Have they not traveled through the earth and seen how was the fate of those before them? Most of them were more in numbers than these, and superior in vigor and vestiges left on the earth. So then, whatever they used to earn did not work for them at all. [82] And when their messengers came to them with manifest signs, they exulted because of whatever of knowledge they had, and they were encircled by what they used to ridicule. [83] And when they saw Our punishment, they said, "We have (now) come to believe in Allah alone, and We have rejected everything we used to ascribe (to Him) as partners." [84] But, their profession of faith was not (competent) to benefit them, once they had seen Our punishment - a

customary practice of Allah that has been there all along in the matter of His servants - and hence, the disbelievers became the losers. [85]

Commentary

In verse 83, it was said: فَرِحُوا بِمَا عِنْدَ هُمْ مِّنَ الْعِلْمِ (they exulted because of whatever of knowledge they had,) that is, when the messengers of Allah Ta'ālā came to these deniers, who were utterly oblivious to their end, with clear arguments in favor of *tauḥīd* (Oneness of Allah) and *'imān* (faith), they took their knowledge to be better and truer than the knowledge brought by prophets, and started rejecting what they said. What was this knowledge with which the disbelievers were exultant to the extent that they would even reject the body of knowledge brought by prophets? It could be some sort of 'compounded ignorance' جهل مرکب (*aljahl-ul-murakkab* whereby an ignorant person, despite his sheer ignorance, believes himself to be knowledgeable). This does not qualify to be 'knowledge' at all. Or, this knowledge of theirs means awareness in the fields of trade, industry and things like that. They really had expertise in these fields according to their time. The noble Qur'ān alludes to this knowledge of theirs in a verse of Sūrah Ar-Rūm in the following words: يَعْلَمُوْنَ ظَاهِرًا مِّنَ الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا وَهُمْ عَنِ الْاٰخِرَةِ هُمْ غٰفِلُوْنَ (They know something superficial of the worldly life, but of the Hereafter they are negligent.- Ar-Rūm, 30:7) It means that these people do know a good deal about the material life of the world, and also know how to get most benefited by it, but are totally ignorant or heedless of the Hereafter where they have to live for ever, either in bliss or in bane, and both of which are also everlasting. In this verse, even if we were to take this knowledge to be the worldly knowledge only, it would means 'since these people deny the Day of Judgment and the Hereafter and do not know, or want to know, its everlasting reward and punishment, therefore, they do not see anything beyond their knowledge of the apparent and are quite pleased with it, and as a result do not pay heed to areas of knowledge brought by the noble prophets.' (Maẓharī)

In verse 85, it was said: فَلَمْ يَكُ يَنْفَعُهُمْ إِيْمَانُهُمْ (But, their profession of faith was not [competent] to benefit them, once they had seen Our punishment), that is, it is after seeing the punishment that these people are confessing to the true faith, but a declaration of faith at this late hour is not acceptable and trustworthy with Allah. It appears in Ḥadīth: يقبل الله توبة العبد مالم يغرغر (Allah accepts the taubah [repentance] of the servant

before the agony and rattle of death overtakes him). (Ibn Kathīr) Similarly, once Divine punishment has come face to face, no repentance and no declaration of faith made by anyone remains acceptable.

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنّا نَسئَلكَ العفووالعافية والتوبة قبل الموت واليسر والمعافاة عند الموت والمغفرة والرَّحمة بعد الموت ببركة الِ حٰمٓ وصلى اللّٰه تعالىٰ على النّبى الكريم.

O Allah, we ask of You the obliteration of all sins, and well-being, and repentance before death, and ease and pardon at the time of death, and forgiveness and mercy after death with the barakah of 'Al Ḥā Mīm, and blessings of Allah on the noble prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم .

Alḥamdulillāh

The Commentary on

Sūrah Al-Mu'min

[Ghāfir]

Sūrah Ḥāmīm As-Sajdah

Sūrah Ḥāmīm As-Sajdah is Makkī. It has 54 verses and 6 sections

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 8

حٰمٓ ﴿۱﴾ تَنْزِيْلٌ مِّنَ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ ﴿۲﴾ كِتٰبٌ فُصِّلَتْ اٰيٰتُهٗ قُرْاٰنًا
عَرَبِيًّا لِّقَوْمٍ يَّعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿۳﴾ بَشِيْرًا وَّنَذِيْرًا ۚ فَاَعْرَضَ اَكْثَرُهُمْ فَهُمْ
لَا يَسْمَعُوْنَ ﴿۴﴾ وَقَالُوْا قُلُوْبُنَا فِيْٓ اَكِنَّةٍ مِّمَّا تَدْعُوْنَآ اِلَيْهِ وَفِيْٓ اٰذَانِنَا
وَقْرٌ وَّمِنْۢ بَيْنِنَا وَبَيْنِكَ حِجَابٌ فَاعْمَلْ اِنَّنَا عٰمِلُوْنَ ﴿۵﴾ قُلْ اِنَّمَآ اَنَا
بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُكُمْ يُوْحٰٓى اِلَيَّ اَنَّمَآ اِلٰهُكُمْ اِلٰهٌ وَّاحِدٌ فَاسْتَقِيْمُوْٓا اِلَيْهِ
وَاسْتَغْفِرُوْهُ ؕ وَوَيْلٌ لِّلْمُشْرِكِيْنَ ﴿۶﴾ الَّذِيْنَ لَا يُؤْتُوْنَ الزَّكٰوةَ وَهُمْ
بِالْاٰخِرَةِ هُمْ كٰفِرُوْنَ ﴿۷﴾ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ لَهُمْ
اَجْرٌ غَيْرُ مَمْنُوْنٍ ﴿۸﴾

Ḥā Mīm [1] This is a revelation from the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful- [2] a book whose verses are elaborated in the form of an Arabic Qur'ān for a people who understand[3], having good news and warning. Yet most of them turned away, so they do not listen. [4] And they say, " Our hearts are [wrapped] in covers against that to which you invite us, and in our ears there is deafness, and between you and us there is a barrier. So, do (in your way). We too are doing (in our own way)". [5] Say, " I am but a human being like you; it is revealed

to me that your god is only One God. So, become straight towards Him, and seek forgiveness from Him, and woe to the Mushriks (those who ascribe partners to Allah) [6] **who do not pay *zakāh*; and of the life of the Hereafter, they are deniers."** [7] **As for those who believe and do righteous deeds, for them there is a reward that will never be interrupted.** [8]

Commentary

The seven Sūrahs that commence with "Ḥā Mīm" are known as "Al Ḥāmīm' or 'Hawamim'. Some more words are added as suffixes in their names to differentiate between them, for example, the 'Ḥā Mīm' of Sūrah Mu'min is called "Ḥā Mīm Al-Mu'in, and 'Ḥā Mīm' of this Sūrah is called 'Ḥā Mīm Sajdah' or 'Ḥā Mīm Fuṣṣilat'. Both the names of this Sūrah are well-known.

The first addressees of this Sūrah are Quraysh of 'Arabia among whom Qur'ān was revealed in their own language. They had witnessed the marvel of the Qur'ān, and they had also seen innumerable miracles of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. And yet they turned away from the Qur'ān. What to say of understanding, they did not even bear to listen to the Qur'ān. Eventually , in response to the affectionate advices of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, they declared that they neither understand what he says, nor do their hearts accept it, nor are their ears prepared to listen to it, and that there are double barriers between him and them, so he should carry on with his business and leave them to their own.

This is the meaning of the first five verses of this Sūrah. In these verses, Allah Almighty has specially addressed and advised Quraysh that Qur'ān has been revealed in Arabic language, so that you do not have any difficulty in understanding the contents. At the same time three qualities of the Holy Qur'ān have been stated.. Firstly it is said, 'فُصِّلَتْ اٰيٰتُهٗ Here, the word *'fuṣṣilat'* is a derivative of *faṣl* which originally means distinguishing the subjects by separating them. So فُصِّلَتْ means stating things very clearly by explaining in detail, either by separating them subject - wise in different chapters, or by mentioning them at one place. Different subjects like injunctions of Shari'ah, stories, beliefs, refutation of the people of false beliefs, etc. have been stated separately in the verses of the Holy Qur'ān, and each subject has been explained by examples as well. The second and third qualities of the Holy Qur'ān have been stated

as that of communicating good news of everlasting happiness to the believers and of warning the non-believers of perpetual scourges.

And after stating these qualities, it is said towards the end of the verse-3, لِقَوْمٍ يَّعْلَمُوْنَ (for a people who understand) which means that the verses of the Holy Qur'ān being in Arabic, their being clear and evident and their communicating good news as well as warnings can only benefit those people who intend to ponder over them and understand them. But the Arabs and the Quraysh, despite all this, turned away from the Qur'ān, and let alone trying to understand, they did not even bear to listen to the Qur'ān. This has been mentioned at the end of verse 4: "Yet most of them turned away, so they do not listen."

An offer by the infidel's of Makkah to the Holy Prophet ﷺ

The infidels of Quraysh, who are the direct addressees of this Sūrah, tried very hard to suppress the propagation of Islam in early days after the revelation of the Qur'ān, through the use of physical force, and tried equally hard to intimidate the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and those who believed in him by causing to them all sorts of pains and agonies. But despite their opposition, Islam kept on widening the circle of its adherents, and increasing in strength. At first powerful and valiant persons like Sayyidnā 'Umar Ibn Khaṭṭāb رضي الله عنه entered Islam, then Sayyidnā Hamzah رضي الله عنه, one of the accepted leaders of Quraysh, embraced Islam. Now the Quraysh of Makkah started thinking that, instead of intimidation, persuasion and temptation may be more effective in blocking the way for Islam. An incident of this nature has been reproduced by Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Kathīr from the reports of Musnad of Bazzār, Abū Ya'lā and Baghawī. There are some differences in these reports. Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Kathīr has considered the report of Baghawi to be the nearest to the truth. And then he has reproduced this incident from the book 'Kitāb-us-Sirah' written by Muḥammad Ibn Isḥāq and has preferred this version to the other three. Therefore, this incident is being reproduced here in accordance with the report of Ibn Isḥāq.

Muḥammad Ibn Isḥāq has stated that Muḥammad Ibn Ka'b Quraẓī says that this report has reached him from 'Utbah Ibn Rabī'ah who was recognized as one of the foremost leaders of Quraysh. One day he was sitting in Almasjid-ul-Ḥarām with a party of Quraysh, while the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was sitting alone in a corner on the other side.

'Utbah asked his people, "If you agree, I would like to talk to Muḥammad ﷺ and offer him some attractions, so that if he accepts them, we give them to him and he, in exchange, would cease to propagate against our religion and faith. This was a time when Sayyidnā Ḥamzah ؓ had become a Muslim, and the number of Muslims was increasing, and they were getting stronger day by day. All of 'Utbah's men spoke with one voice, and said "O 'Abul-Walīd ('Utbah's filial name)! "Do so. Please talk to him".

'Utbah got up from his place, and went upto the Holy Prophet ﷺ and said, "O nephew! you know that you are high-born and a noble man of the Quraysh; your family is large, noble and respectable to all of us. But you have put the tribe in a great difficulty. You have given such an invitational call which has created differences among us, has made us fools, has stigmatized our deities and our religion, and declared our forefathers to be infidels. So please listen to me. I am going to present a few things to you, so that you may select any of them. The Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "O 'Abdul Walīd! go ahead and say what you wish to say; I am listening to you."

'Utbah 'Abul Walīd said, "O nephew! If the purpose of your movement is to collect possessions, we promise to collect so much wealth for you that you would become the wealthiest person of the nation. If the purpose is to become a leader and a ruler, then all of us would accept you as the leader of the whole of Quraysh, and would not do anything without your order. If you want kingdom, then we accept you as our king. And if the case is that some Jinn or Satan comes to you, and compels you to do these things and you are unable to drive him away, then we will have you treated at our expense, because we know that a person prevailed upon by a Satan can be cured by treatments." 'Utbah kept on speaking at some length and the Holy Prophet ﷺ kept on listening to him.

At the end, the Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "O 'Abdul Walīd! Have you finished? When he said yes, then the Holy Prophet ﷺ said to him, "Now please listen to me." And 'Utbah replied, "No doubt, I would listen to you."

The Holy Prophet ﷺ, instead of saying anything himself started reciting Sūrah Fuṣṣilat (the present Sūrah):

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ. حٰمٓ. تَنْزِيْلٌ مِّنَ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ . كِتٰبٌ فُصِّلَتْ اٰيٰتُهٗ قُرْاٰنًا عَرَبِيًّا لِّقَوْمٍ يَّعْلَمُوْنَ.

"With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful." Merciful. Ḥā Mīm. This is a revelation from the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful-- a book whose verses are elaborated in the form of an Arabic Qur'an for a people who understand."

Bazzār and Baghawī narrate that, during the recitation of the verses of this Sūrah, when the Holy Prophet ﷺ reached this verse:

فَاِنْ اَعْرَضُوْا فَقُلْ اَنْذَرْتُكُمْ صَاعِقَةً مِّثْلَ صَاعِقَةِ عَادٍ وَّثَمُوْدَ

"So, if they turn away, then say, " I have warned you of a calamity like the calamity of 'Ad and Thamūd,"(41:13)

'Utbah put his hand on the blessed mouth of Holy Prophet ﷺ, and asked him to have mercy on his lineage and relationship, and not to recite any further for their sake. Ibn Isḥāq narrates that when the Holy Prophet ﷺ commenced the recitation of these verses, 'Utbah listened quietly and attentively while supporting his back by his hands, till the Holy Prophet ﷺ reached the verse of Sajdah in this Sūrah and prostrated. Then he addressed 'Utbah, and said to him, "You have heard what you heard, and now you are free to do what you like." 'Utbah got up and started walking towards his party. When they saw him coming, his party members started saying among themselves that, by God, 'Abul Walīd's face has changed - it is not the same as it was when he had gone. When 'Utbah reached them, they asked him, "What is the news you have come with?" He said to them:

اِنی سمعت قولا واللّٰه ما سمعت مثله قط، واللّٰه ما هو بالسحر ولا بالشعر ولا بالكهانة، يا معشر قريش اطيعونی واجعلوها لی' خلّوا بين الرجل وبين ما هو فيه فاعتزلوه فواللّٰه ليكونن لقوله الذی سمعت نباء، فان تصبه العرب فقد كفيتموه بغيركم، وان يظهر علی العرب فملكه ملككم وعزه عزّكم وكنتم اسعد الناس به

"I heard such a discourse that, by God, I have never heard any discourse like it before; by God, it is neither a sorcerer's enchantment, nor a poet's poetry, nor a wizard incantation (which they obtain from satans). O my tribe of Quraysh! Listen to me, and let me handle this matter. My advice is that you should give up confronting him, and let him go about his business, because this discourse of his is bound to receive

> eminence. You should wait and see how the rest of Arabia treats them. If, besides Quraysh, the rest of Arabs defeat them, then your problem is solved without any effort on you part, and if he prevails on the rest of Arabs, then his rule will be your rule, their honor will will be your honor, and you will be the luckiest people because of him." (Ibn Kathīr p. 91, vol. 4)

When his Qurayshi companions heard his speech, they said to him "O Abūl Walīd! Muḥammad ﷺ has cast an enchanting spell upon you with his words." 'Utbah replied to them, "I have given you my advice, and now it is upto you to do what you like.

وَقَالُوْا قُلُوْبُنَا فِيْٓ اَكِنَّةٍ - (And they say, " Our hearts are [wrapped] in covers against that to which you invite us - 41:5) Here three statements of the infidels of Quraysh are reproduced. Firstly, they said that there was a cover on their hearts against his discourse, and therefore they do not understand what he says. Secondly, that their ears are deaf to listen to his speech. Thirdly, that there are barriers between him and them. The Holy Qur'ān has reproduced this statement of theirs in the context of denouncing it, which indicates that these statements are wrong. But at another place, Qur'ān has also stated their condition to be the same. A verse of Sūrah An'ām states:

وَجَعَلْنَا عَلٰى قُلُوْبِهِمْ اَكِنَّةً اَنْ يَّفْقَهُوْهُ وَفِيْٓ اٰذَانِهِمْ وَقْرًا

> But We have put coverings on their hearts, so that they do not understand, and heaviness in their ears. - 6:25.

One may doubt that there is a conflict between this verse and that of Sūrah An'ām in this respect. But the answer is that the infidels, by saying the above, meant that they were helpless and excusable, because their hearts were curtained, their ears were leaden and there were barriers between them and him. So how could they listen to him and accept what he said? This is how they proved themselves to be helpless. And when the Holy Qur'ān stated their condition (in Sūrah An'ām) to be the same, it did not consider them to be helpless, rather held them fully capable of hearing and understanding. It is when they refused even to hear, and had no intention of understanding, then as a punishment, heedlessness and ignorance were imposed upon them, but not to the degree that they were deprived of their volition; rather if they had changed their minds even then, their abilities of hearing and

understanding would have been restored fully. (Bayān-ul-Qur'ān)

Prophetic reply to the Denial and Ridicule of Disbelievers

The infidels saying that their hearts were covered and their ears were leaden, etc., was not because they had become deaf and bereft of intellect; rather it was a kind of ridicule and jest that they used to make. But the reply to this offensive ridicule that the Holy Prophet ﷺ was directed to give was not to be offensive in the like manner, but to express his ﷺ humility that he ﷺ is not God, having authority over everything, rather he ﷺ is also a human being; the only difference is that his Lord has given him ﷺ guidance through *waḥy*, and has supported him with miracles. It should have resulted in all of them declaring their faith in him. Even now they are advised to turn in worship and obedience to Allah only and to repent and renounce the past sins.

Toward the end of the address, Both the aspects of glad tidings and of warnings of the Qur'ān have been presented to them, making it clear that there are dire consequences for the *mushrikīn* (those who associate partners with Allah) and eternal rewards for the believers. In the context of the evil fate of the Mushriks, one reason for it has been mentioned that these people did not use to pay *Zakāh*. This gives rise to some questions. The first one is that these verses were revealed in Makkah, whereas *Zakāh* was made obligatory in Madīnah. So, how can they be accused of non-payment of *Zakāh* before *Zakāh* was made obligatory?

Ibn Kathīr, in reply to this question, has said that *Zakāh,* in principle, had been obligated alongwith Ṣalāh right from the beginning of Islam, as mentioned in Sūrah Muzzammil. However the determination of the Nisāb (minimum capital and property for the applicability of *Zakāh*) and the arrangements for its collection were made in Madīnah. Therefore it is not correct to say that *Zakāh* was not obligated in Makkah.

Are Non-Muslims required to follow the practical injunctions of Shari'ah?

The second doubt is that many jurisprudents do not consider Non-muslims to have been asked or required to carry out religious deeds such as *Ṣalāh,* Fasting, *Ḥajj* and *Zakāh*. The direction is that they have to embrace the faith first, and then they are liable to the practical precepts of Sharī'ah. According to this view, they are not liable to pay

zakāh. Why then have they been reprimanded for not paying Zakāh in this verse?

It can be said in reply that many of the leading scholars and experts of Islamic jurisprudence are of the view that even the Non-Muslims are required to carry out the obligatory duties of religion; If this view is adopted, there remains no doubt about this verse that has mentioned non-payment of *zakāh* as one of the reasons for their being punished. As for those scholars who do not consider Non-Muslims to have been asked to carry out the obligatory duties, they can say that the real denunciation is not for non-payment of Zakāh, but because this non-payment is due to their disbelief and is a sign of it. Therefore the object of the reprimand is that had they been believers, they would have been strict in paying Zakāh; their fault is their failure to embrace the faith. (Bayān-ul-Qur'ān).

The detailed discussion of whether or not the infidels have been asked to follow the practical precepts of Sharī'ah may be found in the fifth volume of the author's Arabic book "Aḥkām-ul-Qur'ān".

The third question which arises here is that the commandment for Ṣalāh is the most important of all the commandments of Islam which has not been mentioned here, so what is the wisdom behind making a special mention of Zakāh? Qurṭubī etc., have said in reply that Quraysh of Arabia were wealthy people, and they were known for their trait of giving alms and charity and helping the poor. But when somebody would become a Muslim, they would deprive him of such financial help and social assistance also. Zakāh has been specially mentioned because the object is to denounce this practice. (Allah knows best)

لَهُمْ اَجْرٌ غَيْرُ مَمْنُوْن (For them there is a reward that will never be interrupted.....41:8) The word *mamnūn* used here means something interrupted. The sense is that the reward of those people who are firm in their faith and regular in their good deeds would be continuous and eternal. Some exegetes have explained the intention of the verse that if a Muslim, despite being regular in religious duties, could not perform them at any time due to illness, travel or some other reason, the reward for the good deeds is not cut off. Rather, Allah Almighty orders the angels to keep on crediting those good deeds to his account which he used to carry out regularly in normal conditions, but could not do them due to illness or

some other reason. Aḥādīth on this subject are narrated in Ṣaḥīḥ of Bukhārī as reported by Sayyidnā Abū Mūsā Ash'arī and in Sharḥ-us-Sunnah of Baghawī by Sayyidnā Ibn 'Umar ﷺ and by Sayyidnā Anas ﷺ and in Razīn by Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd ﷺ (Maẓharī)

Verses 9 - 12

قُلْ اَئِنَّكُمْ لَتَكْفُرُوْنَ بِالَّذِیْ خَلَقَ الْاَرْضَ فِیْ یَوْمَیْنِ وَتَجْعَلُوْنَ لَهٗ
اَنْدَادًا ؕ ذٰلِكَ رَبُّ الْعٰلَمِیْنَ ﴿۹﴾ وَجَعَلَ فِیْهَا رَوَاسِیَ مِنْ فَوْقِهَا
وَبٰرَكَ فِیْهَا وَقَدَّرَ فِیْهَاۤ اَقْوَاتَهَا فِیْۤ اَرْبَعَةِ اَیَّامٍ ؕ سَوَآءً لِّلسَّآئِلِیْنَ ﴿۱۰﴾
ثُمَّ اسْتَوٰۤی اِلَی السَّمَآءِ وَهِیَ دُخَانٌ فَقَالَ لَهَا وَلِلْاَرْضِ ائْتِیَا طَوْعًا
اَوْ كَرْهًا ؕ قَالَتَاۤ اَتَیْنَا طَآئِعِیْنَ ﴿۱۱﴾ فَقَضٰهُنَّ سَبْعَ سَمٰوَاتٍ فِیْ
یَوْمَیْنِ وَاَوْحٰی فِیْ كُلِّ سَمَآءٍ اَمْرَهَا ؕ وَزَیَّنَّا السَّمَآءَ الدُّنْیَا
بِمَصَابِیْحَ ۖۗ وَحِفْظًا ؕ ذٰلِكَ تَقْدِیْرُ الْعَزِیْزِ الْعَلِیْمِ ﴿۱۲﴾

Say, Do you really disbelieve in the One who has created the earth in two days, and ascribe to Him partners? That is the Lord of the worlds. [9] **He has placed firm mountains in it (the earth) towering above it, and put blessings in it, and proportioned its foods therein, in four days, equal for those who ask.** [10] **Then He turned straight to the sky, while it was a smoke, and said to it and to the earth, " Come (to My obedience), both of you, willingly or unwillingly." Both said, " We come willingly."** [11] **So He accomplished them as seven skies in two days, and settled in every sky its (due) thing. And We have decorated the closest sky with lamps, and protected it properly. All this is the determination of the All-Mighty, the All-Knowing.** [12]

Commentary

The real objective of these eloquent verses is to warn the people who, denying the Oneness of Allah, associate others with Him. With reference to the great creations of Allah Almighty in the form of heavens and the earth, and the wisdom underlying their creation, the Mushriks are

reprimanded that they are so irrational in their beliefs that they believe such a Great and Omni-potent Creator to be in need of having partners in carrying out His divine functions. A reprimanding statement with a similar nature has also appeared in Sūrah Al-Baqarah in the following words:

كَيْفَ تَكْفُرُوْنَ بِاللّٰهِ وَكُنْتُمْ اَمْوَاتًا فَاَحْيَاكُمْ، ثُمَّ يُمِيْتُكُمْ ثُمَّ يُحْيِيْكُمْ ثُمَّ اِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُوْنَ ﴿٢٨﴾ هُوَالَّذِىْ خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مَّا فِى الْاَرْضِ جَمِيْعًا ، ثُمَّ اسْتَوٰى اِلَى السَّمَآءِ فَسَوّٰىهُنَّ سَبْعَ سَمٰوٰتٍ ط وَهُوَ بِكُلِّ شَىْءٍ عَلِيْمٌ ﴿٢٩﴾

"How is it that you deny Allah despite that you were lifeless and He gave you life, then He will make you die, then make you alive again, and then to Him you will be returned? It is He who created for you all that the earth contains; then He turned to the heavens and made them seven skies -- and He is the knower of all things." (Verses 2:28-29)

The order of creation, the number of days in which this creation took place and other details are not given in the verses of Sūrah Al-Baqarah; they are mentioned here in Sūrah Fuṣṣilat.

The order of creation of the skies and the earth, and the Days of Creation

Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānawi has stated in Bayāṇ-ul-Qur'ān that, although the creation of the earth and the skies has been mentioned briefly or in detail at hundreds of places in the Qur'ān, yet the sequence of their creation is probably mentioned in three verses only. One is this verse of Ḥā Mīm Sajdah, the second is the above mentioned verse of Sūrah Al-Baqarah, and the third is the following verse of Sūrah Nāzi'āt:

ءَاَنْتُمْ اَشَدُّ خَلْقًا اَمِ السَّمَآءُ بَنٰهَا رَفَعَ سَمْكَهَا فَسَوّٰىهَا وَاَغْطَشَ لَيْلَهَا وَاَخْرَجَ ضُحٰهَا وَالْاَرْضَ بَعْدَ ذٰلِكَ دَحٰهَا اَخْرَجَ مِنْهَا مَآءَهَا وَمَرْعٰهَا وَالْجِبَالَ اَرْسٰهَا

"Are you more difficult to create, or the sky? He has built it, He has raised its height, then made it proper and darkened its night and brought forth its daylight and, after that, He spread out the earth. From it He brought out its water and its meadows, and firmly fixed the mountains."(79:27-32)

During a cursory look into these three verses, one may feel a sort of apparent contradiction between them, because we find from Sūrah Al-Baqarah and Sūrah Ḥā Mīm that the earth was created before the

sky, whereas in Sūrah Nāzi'āt, earth appears to have been created after the sky. Maulānā Thānawi رحمه الله تعالىٰ has stated that after a careful study of all these verses, it appears to him that only the matter of the earth came into existence first, and before it was molded into shape, the matter of sky came into existence in the form of a smoke. After that, the earth was molded into shape with mountains, trees, etc. and then the seven skies were given form out of the floating smoky matter. He hopes that this clarification would explain the harmony between all the verses. Only Allah knows the truth. (Bayān-ul-Qur'ān – Sūrah Al-Baqarah, section 3).

Some questions regarding this verse and their answers given by Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ have been reported in Ṣaḥīḥ of Bukhārī. The explanation of this verse given by Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ is about the same as that given above by Maulānā Thānawī رحمه الله تعالىٰ – the words quoted by Ibn Kathīr are:

وخلق الارض فی یومین ثم خلق السمآء ثم استوٰی الی السّماء فسوّٰبهنّ فی یومین اٰخرین ثم دحی الارض ودحیها ان اخرج منها المآء والمرعٰی وخلق الجبال والرمال والجماد و الآکام وما بینهما فی یومین اٰخرین فذٰلک قوله تعالیٰ دَحٰـها.

Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Kathīr has also quoted the following as explanation of this verse given by Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ with reference to Ibn Jarīr:

> "The Jews of Madinah came to see the Holy Prophet ﷺ, and asked him about the creation of the earth and of the skies. The Holy Prophet ﷺ told them that Allah Almighty created the earth on Sunday and Monday, the mountains and the minerals therein on Tuesday, and the trees, water springs, cities, buildings and desolate plains on Wednesday – all this in four days as stated in the verse.
>
> اَئِنَّكُمْ لَتَكْفُرُوْنَ بِالَّذِیْ خَلَقَ الْاَرْضَ فِیْ یَوْمَیْنِ وَتَجْعَلُوْنَ لَهٗٓ اَنْدَادًاؕ ذٰلِکَ رَبُّ الْعٰلَمِیْنَ . وَجَعَلَ فِیْهَا رَوَاسِیَ مِنْ فَوْقِهَا وَبٰرَکَ فِیْهَا وَقَدَّرَ فِیْهَآ اَقْوَاتَهَا فِیْٓ اَرْبَعَةِ اَیَّامٍؕ سَوَآءً لِّلسَّآئِلِیْنَ .
>
> Then He created the sky on Thursday. And on Friday, He created the stars, the sun, the moon and the angels. All this was completed on Friday when three hours were still left. All the disasters and troubles that everything is going to face were created in the second hour, and in the third period Sayyidnā 'Ādam ﷺ was created and lodged in Paradise, Iblīs was

> commanded to prostrate before Sayyidnā 'Ādam ﷺ and turned out of Paradise when he refused to prostrate. All this was completed till the end of the third hour....(Ibn Kathīr). At the end, Ibn Kathīr says: "This *ḥadīth* has an element of gharabah" (that is, the contents of this Ḥadīth are not corroborated by other sources)

The commencement of creation took place on Saturday according to a Ḥadīth narrated by Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ﷺ, reported in Ṣaḥīḥ of Muslim. As per this Ḥadīth, it took seven days for the creation of the earth and skies. But generally the explicit verses of the Qur'ān mention the duration of creation to be six days.

وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا فِىْ سِتَّةِ اَيَّامٍ وَّمَا مَسَّنَا مِنْ لُّغُوْبٍ

> "And We created the heavens and the earth and all that is between them in six days, and no weariness even touched Us."(50:38)

Because of this, and also because of its (weak) chain of narrators, this Ḥadīth has been held as *'ma'lul'* (defective) by the leading *muḥaddithīn*. Ibn Kathīr رحمه الله تعالى has stated that this Ḥadīth is one of the strange ones of Ṣaḥīḥ of Muslim, and then stated that Imām Bukhārī, in his book Tarikh Kabīr, has considered this narration to be *ma'lul* (defective). And some scholars have quoted this statement as a saying of Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ﷺ, narrated by Ka'b Aḥbār, and not as a statement of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, and have said that this is the most correct. (Ibn Kathīr p. 94, vol. 4)

Similarly, other masters of Ḥadīth like Ibn-ul-Madini, Baihaqī, etc. have also considered it to be a statement of Ka'b Aḥbār. (Foot note of Zād-ul-Masīr by Ibn-ul-Jauzī, p. 273, vol. 7)

The narration of Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ quoted above from Ibn Jarīr has also an element of *gharabah,* (being against other sources) according to Ibn Kathīr. One reason for its *gharabah* is that in this narration creation of Sayyidnā 'Ādam ﷺ took place alongwith the creation of skies in the last hour of Friday, and the divine order for prostration and the exit of Iblis from the Paradise is also mentioned to have taken place in the same hour. But it is patently clear from the text of many verses of the Qur'ān that creation of Sayyidnā 'Ādam ﷺ took place a long time after the creation of the earth and skies, when the earth

was provided with all the necessities, and it was inhabited by the Jinns and satans (devils). It was after all this that Allah Ta'ālā told the angels that He was going to make a vicegerent on the earth. (Maẓharī)

Briefly, of all the *aḥādīth* wherein the duration, days and sequence of creation of the earth and skies is narrated, no narration is such which can be said to be as absolutely certain as the Qur'ān. Rather, it is very likely that these may be Israelite traditions, not noble *aḥādīth*, as clarified by Ibn Kathīr about the Ḥadīth quoted in Ṣaḥīḥ of Muslim and Nasā'ī. Therefore conclusions should be drawn from the verses of the Qur'ān only. The one thing found absolutely certain from the verses of the Qur'ān collectively is that the earth, the skies and whatever is inside them were created in six days only. The other thing found from the verses of Sūrah Ḥā Mīm Sajdah is that the creation of the earth, its mountains, trees, etc. took full four days. The third thing found is that the creation of skies took two days – it is not clarified whether it took two full days. There is some indication that two full days were not used and some part of the last day, being Friday, was left unused. It appears from these verses that it took four days for the creation of the earth and the remaining two days for the creation of the skies, the earth having been created first. But the verse of Sūrah Nazi'āt states clearly that the laying out of the earth and its completion took place after the creation of the skies. Therefore the sequence stated above, with reference to Bayān-ul-Qur'ān, that the creation of the earth took place in two stages, is not beyond reason. In the first two days, the earth and the matter for mountains, etc. were created, in the next two days the skies were created, and in the last two days the laying out of the earth and the creation of the mountains, trees rivers, springs etc. was completed. In this way the four days of the creation of the earth were not continuous. As for the sequence mentioned in the present verse of Sūrah Ḥā Mīm Sajdah, it is stated first that the creation of the earth took place in two days: خَلَقَ الْأَرْضَ فِيْ يَوْمَيْنِ (the One who has created the earth in two days, - 41:9), then after giving a reprimand to the *mushrikīn*, it is stated separately: وَجَعَلَ فِيْهَا رَوَاسِىَ مِنْ فَوْقِهَا وَبٰرَكَ فِيْهَا وَقَدَّرَ فِيْهَا اَقْوَاتَهَا فِىْ اَرْبَعَةِ اَيَّامٍ (He has placed firm mountains in it [the earth] towering above it, and put blessings in it, and proportioned its foods therein, in four days - 10). It should be remembered that the four days mentioned in this verse are inclusive of the first two days mentioned in verse 9, according to the

consensus of the exegetes. The first two days and the later four days are not separate, otherwise the total period of creation would become eight days which is against the explicit statement of the Qur'ān.

It appears that it would have been more proper at this point if, after mentioning the creation of earth in two days, the creation of mountains etc. were also mentioned in two days, and thus it would have been known that the total number of days taken for the creation of earth was four. But by choosing to state that the number of days including the remainder of the earth's creations totals four, Qur'ān has probably indicated that the four days were not continuous, but in two parts – two days before the creation of the skies, and two days after it. The creation of mountains etc. mentioned in the verse 10, relates to the period after the creation of the skies. And Allah knows best.

وَجَعَلَ فِيْهَا رَوَاسِيَ مِنْ فَوْقِهَا (He has placed firm mountains in it (the earth) towering above it,...41:10) The mountains have been created to maintain the earth's balance as has been clarified in many verses of Qur'ān. It was not necessary for this purpose to raise them above the earth's surface and to make them so high – they could have been placed inside the earth also. But in raising them above and making them so high as to keep them away from the reach of human beings and animals, generally, there were thousands, rather innumerable, benefits for the inhabitants of the earth. Hence the words, "towering above it" in this verse point out to this special blessing.

وَقَدَّرَ فِيْهَا اَقْوَاتَهَا فِيْ اَرْبَعَةِ اَيَّامٍ سَوَآءً لِّلسَّآئِلِيْنَ (and proportioned its foods therein, in four days, equal for those who ask......41:10) اقوات (*Aqwāt*) is plural of *Qūt* قُوْت which means food, sustenance, including common necessities of human life. (Abū 'Ubaid – Zād-ul-Masīr by Ibn-ul- Jauzī)

Ḥasan ﷺ and Suddī have said in its explanation that Allah Almighty has predetermined the sustenance and maintenance for the inhabitants of every region according to their need and expedience in the sense that He issued directions that such and such items be produced in such and such qualities in this region of the earth. This predetermination has caused every region of the earth to have characteristics of its own, and different kinds of minerals, different kinds of vegetation, trees and animals have been created according to the needs, nature and preferences

of that zone.

This arrangement results in every region having different products and different dresses – *'Aṣb* in Yemen, Saburi in Sābūr, Ṭayalisah in Ray, wheat in some region, rice and other grains in other regions, cotton in some areas, jute in some others, apples and grapes in some areas, mangos in others; these differences in items accord with the differences in the nature of the different regions. 'Ikrimah and Ḍaḥḥāk state that these differences in the products in different regions have opened ways for international trade and for mutual cooperation between different regions and countries of the world. No region is independent of other regions for the fulfillment of its needs; mutual wants are the only firm basis for mutual cooperation. 'Ikrimah has stated that in some areas salt is sold for an equal weight of gold.

In fact, Allah Almighty has made this earth, so to say, such a great store of all necessities such as food, shelter, clothes, etc. of all its inhabitant, including billions and billions of humans and innumerable animals that are to come in this world up to Doomsday. These necessities have been kept inside it, and they will keep on growing and being supplied as needed until the Last Day of this world. All a man has to do is to take the necessities out of the earth according to his need and use them.

Further on, the text states: سَوَآءً لِّلسَّآئِلِيْنَ (equal for those who ask -10). Most of the commentators (*mufassirīn*) have related this sentence to the four days. It means that all these great creations took place in exactly four days. Generally 'four' does not always mean exactly four – it may be slightly more or slightly less, but the fractions are disregarded in such cases, and it is still called 'four'. The addition of the word 'equal' here in the verse has eliminated this possibility, and clarified that the creation of the earth and the skies and what is placed in them took place in exactly four days. And the word 'for those who ask' means those people who asked the Holy Prophet ﷺ regarding the creation of the earth and the skies, as the Jews did according to Tafsīr Ibn Jarīr and Ad-Durr-ul-Manthur. They have been told that all this creation took place in exactly four days. (Ibn Kathīr, Qurṭubī, Rūḥ)

And some exegetes Ibn Zayd, etc., have linked the words 'for those

who ask' with the foregoing sentence 'proportioned its foods therein" and held 'those who ask' to mean the needy people who ask for food. The meaning in this case would be that Allah Almighty has created all these different kinds and species of foods and necessities for the benefit of those who need and seek them, and since needy people usually ask for food, they have been called 'those who ask'. (Al-Baḥr-ul-Muḥīṭ)

Ibn Kathīr has quoted this explanation and said that it is like the statement of the Qur'ān اٰتٰىكُمْ مِّنْ كُلِّ مَا سَاَلْتُمُوْهُ (And He gave you whatever you asked for. - 14:34) 'you asked for' in this verse means 'you were in need of' even though it has not been asked literally, because Allah Almighty has bestowed those things even to those who did not ask for them.

فَقَالَ لَهَا وَلِلْاَرْضِ ائْتِيَا طَوْعًا اَوْ كَرْهًا قَالَتَآ اَتَيْنَا طَآئِعِيْنَ (and said to it and to the earth, "Come [to My obedience], both of you, willingly or unwillingly." Both said, "We come willingly." - 41:11) This command addressed to the earth and sky and their compliant and obedient reply, according to some exegetes, is a metaphorical expression for the readiness of the earth and the sky to comply with every order from Allah Almighty. But Ibn 'Aṭiyyah and other leading research scholars have stated that this is no metaphor – it is based on reality. Allah Almighty had endowed the earth and the skies with the faculty of intellect and comprehension of the commands addressed to them and also with the power of speaking and replying. Tafsīr Al-Baḥr-ul-Muḥīṭ, after quoting this explanation, has held it to be the most suitable and the best. Ibn Kathīr, after quoting the above explanation, has also quoted the statement of some exegetes that the earth's reply was given by that portion of the earth on which Baytullah has been constructed and the sky's reply was given by that portion of the sky which is just above the Baytullah, known as Al-Bayt-ul- Ma'mūr.

Verses 13 – 25

فَاِنْ اَعْرَضُوْا فَقُلْ اَنْذَرْتُكُمْ صٰعِقَةً مِّثْلَ صٰعِقَةِ عَادٍ وَّثَمُوْدَ ﴿١٣﴾
اِذْ جَآءَتْهُمُ الرُّسُلُ مِنْ بَيْنِ اَيْدِيْهِمْ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ اَلَّا تَعْبُدُوْٓا اِلَّا اللّٰهَ
قَالُوْا لَوْ شَآءَ رَبُّنَا لَاَنْزَلَ مَلٰٓئِكَةً فَاِنَّا بِمَآ اُرْسِلْتُمْ بِهٖ كٰفِرُوْنَ ﴿١٤﴾ فَاَمَّا

عَادٌ فَاسْتَكْبَرُوْا فِى الْاَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ وَقَالُوْا مَنْ اَشَدُّ مِنَّا قُوَّةً ؕ
اَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا اَنَّ اللّٰهَ الَّذِىْ خَلَقَهُمْ هُوَ اَشَدُّ مِنْهُمْ قُوَّةً ؕ وَكَانُوْا بِاٰيٰتِنَا
يَجْحَدُوْنَ ﴿١٥﴾ فَاَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ رِيْحًا صَرْصَرًا فِىْۤ اَيَّامٍ نَّحِسَاتٍ
لِّنُذِيْقَهُمْ عَذَابَ الْخِزْىِ فِى الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا ؕ وَلَعَذَابُ الْاٰخِرَةِ اَخْزٰى
وَهُمْ لَا يُنْصَرُوْنَ ﴿١٦﴾ وَاَمَّا ثَمُوْدُ فَهَدَيْنٰهُمْ فَاسْتَحَبُّوا الْعَمٰى عَلَى
الْهُدٰى فَاَخَذَتْهُمْ صٰعِقَةُ الْعَذَابِ الْهُوْنِ بِمَا كَانُوْا يَكْسِبُوْنَ ﴿١٧﴾ ج
وَنَجَّيْنَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَكَانُوْا يَتَّقُوْنَ ﴿١٨﴾ ع وَيَوْمَ يُحْشَرُ اَعْدَآءُ اللّٰهِ
اِلَى النَّارِ فَهُمْ يُوْزَعُوْنَ ﴿١٩﴾ حَتّٰۤى اِذَا مَا جَآءُوْهَا شَهِدَ عَلَيْهِمْ
سَمْعُهُمْ وَاَبْصَارُهُمْ وَجُلُوْدُهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوْا يَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿٢٠﴾ وَقَالُوْا
لِجُلُوْدِهِمْ لِمَ شَهِدْتُّمْ عَلَيْنَا ؕ قَالُوْۤا اَنْطَقَنَا اللّٰهُ الَّذِىْۤ اَنْطَقَ كُلَّ
شَىْءٍ وَّهُوَ خَلَقَكُمْ اَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ وَّاِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُوْنَ ﴿٢١﴾ وَمَا كُنْتُمْ
تَسْتَتِرُوْنَ اَنْ يَّشْهَدَ عَلَيْكُمْ سَمْعُكُمْ وَلَاۤ اَبْصَارُكُمْ وَلَا جُلُوْدُكُمْ
وَلٰكِنْ ظَنَنْتُمْ اَنَّ اللّٰهَ لَا يَعْلَمُ كَثِيْرًا مِّمَّا تَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿٢٢﴾ وَذٰلِكُمْ
ظَنُّكُمُ الَّذِىْ ظَنَنْتُمْ بِرَبِّكُمْ اَرْدٰىكُمْ فَاَصْبَحْتُمْ مِّنَ الْخٰسِرِيْنَ ﴿٢٣﴾
فَاِنْ يَّصْبِرُوْا فَالنَّارُ مَثْوًى لَّهُمْ ؕ وَاِنْ يَّسْتَعْتِبُوْا فَمَا هُمْ مِّنَ الْمُعْتَبِيْنَ
﴿٢٤﴾ وَقَيَّضْنَا لَهُمْ قُرَنَآءَ فَزَيَّنُوْا لَهُمْ مَّا بَيْنَ اَيْدِيْهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ
وَحَقَّ عَلَيْهِمُ الْقَوْلُ فِىْۤ اُمَمٍ قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ مِّنَ الْجِنِّ وَالْاِنْسِ ج
اِنَّهُمْ كَانُوْا خٰسِرِيْنَ ﴿٢٥﴾ ع

So, if they turn away, then say, "I have warned you of a calamity like the calamity of 'Ād and Thamūd, [13] when the messengers came to them from their front and from their back, saying, "Do not worship anyone but Allah." They said, "Had our Lord (really) willed (to send someone as messenger), He would have sent down angels. So, we are deniers of what you have been sent

with." [14] As for 'Ad, they showed arrogance in the land with no right (to do so), and said, "Who is stronger than us in power?" Did they not see that Allah, who created them, is stronger than them in power? And they used to reject Our signs. [15] So, We let loose a wild wind on them in unlucky days to make them taste the humiliating punishment in the present life. And of course, the punishment of the Hereafter will be much more humiliating, and they will not be helped. [16] And as for Thamud, We showed them the way, but they preferred blindness to the guidance. Therefore, they were seized by the bang of the abasing punishment because of what they used to earn. [17] And We saved those who believed and used to be God-fearing. [18] And (remind them of) the day when Allah's enemies will be mustered towards the Fire. So they will be kept under control, [19] until when they will come to it, their ears and their eyes and their skins will testify against them about what they used to do. [20] And they will say to their skins, "Why did you testify against us?" They (the skins) will say, " We were made to speak by Allah, the One who has made every thing to speak." And He had created you the first time, and to Him you are going to be returned. [21] And you had not been hiding your selves (when committing sins) because of (the apprehension) that your ears and your eyes and your skins would bear witness against you, but you thought that Allah did not know much of what you did. [22] And this thought of yours that you conceived about your Lord brought you to ruin, and you became among the losers. [23] Now, if they endure patiently, even then the Fire is their abode, and if they seek forgiveness, they are not among those (who could be) forgiven. [24] And We had assigned for them fellows (in the worldly life) who beautified for them what was before them and what was behind them, and thus they believed that whatever they were doing was good. 'what was before them' refers to their present acts, while 'what was behind them' refers to their past acts. And (thus) the word (of punishment) became due against them along with the communities that passed before them from Jinns and human beings. Surely they were the losers. [25]

Commentary

The basic purpose of these verses is to warn the people of Makkah

that if, even after seeing the manifest proofs of the Oneness of Allah, they do not accept the call of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, they may face a punishment like the earlier people of 'Ād and Thamūd had faced. In this context, a brief account of what happened to these people has been given. The people of Makkah are also reminded that their punishment on the Day of Judgment will be much more severe, and they will not be able to escape it, because even the organs of their body will testify against them. And in this context, some events of that Day are mentioned.

فَأَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ رِيحًا صَرْصَرًا (So, We let loose a wild wind on them - 41:16) This is the explanation of what was mentioned as 'calamity of 'Ād and Thamud' in the earlier verse. The Arabic word used in the text is *ṣā'iqah*. It originally means 'something that renders one unconscious. That is why the thunderbolt is also called *ṣā'iqah,* and unforeseen calamity and disaster is also called ṣā'iqah. The storm which entrapped the people of 'Ād was also a *'ṣā'iqah',* and has been mentioned in the present verse as 'wild wind' which was a wild tempest of extremely high speed and had piercing sound. (Qurṭubī)

Mentioning the details of this tempest, Ḍaḥḥāk ﷺ has said that rains had been totally stopped from them by Allah Almighty for three years, and dry tempestuous winds kept on blousing all the time, and for eight days and seven nights, they had continuous extremely severe windstorm. Some narrations have it that this event took place in the end of month of Shawwal, commenced on a Wednesday and kept on till the next Wednesday. Whenever any nation has been subjected to a scourge, it has happened on a Wednesday. (Qurṭubī, Maẓharī)

Sayyidnā Jābir Ibn 'Abdullāh ﷺ has stated that when Allah Almighty wants the welfare of a nation, He orders rain to fall on them, and stops very fast winds from blousing over them, whereas when a nation is to face a misfortune, rain is withheld from them, and strong winds start blousing frequently.

فِيْ أَيَّامٍ نَّحِسَاتٍ (in unlucky days....41:16). It is established by the principles of Islam and *aḥādīth* of the Holy Prophet ﷺ that no day or night is in itself unlucky or ill-omened. The days of the windstorm over the people of 'Ād have been called 'unlucky' because those days had become ill-omened for them due to their misdeeds. It does not necessarily

mean that those days were ill-omened for every body. (Maẓharī and Bayān-ul-Qur'ān). The detailed investigation as to whether anything can be ill-omened by its nature can be seen in the author's book Aḥkām-ul-Qur'ān Vol. 5 in Arabic)

فَهُمْ يُوزَعُونَ (So they will be kept under control.....41:19) The original word used in the text is '*Yuza'ūn*' which is derived from *waz'* which means 'to stop', 'to prevent'. Most of the learned exegetes have explained it in the sense that when people of Hell, who will be numerous, will be taken forward to the field of hashr and the place of reckoning, the people in the front will be halted for a while, so that the people in the rear also catch up with them. This will be done to avoid indiscipline. (It is this interpretation of the verse on the basis of which it is translated as 'kept under control'.) And some exegetes have translated 'Yuza'ūn' as 'pushed' which means that they would be driven towards the place of reckoning by being pushed. (Qurṭubī)

وَمَا كُنتُمْ تَسْتَتِرُونَ اَنْ يَّشْهَدَ عَلَيْكُمْ سَمْعُكُمْ (And you had not been hiding your selves [when committing sins] because of [the apprehension] that your ears and your eyes and your skins would bear witness against you,.....41:22) This verse means that if anyone wants to commit a sin or a crime, he may hide it from others, but how can he hide it from his own limbs and organs? When it is known that our ears, eyes, hands, feet, skin and hair are not ours, rather they are witnesses of the state against us, and when they would be questioned about our deeds, they would give true evidence, then there is no way to hide the commitment of a crime or a sin. The only way to avoid the disgrace is to keep away from sin. Although it is not expected from the deniers of Oneness of Allah and of prophethood, that it would enter their minds that their organs and limbs would speak up before Allah Almighty and give evidence against themselves, yet any intelligent person could have understood that it is totally impossible that the One who has created him from a lowly matter, given him ability to hear and see, brought him up and made him young, will not fully know his deeds and state of affairs. But you had thought, against this evident matter, that Allah Almighty had no knowledge of many of your deeds. This false assumption encouraged you to commit '*shirk*' and '*kufr*'. This is the meaning of Verse 23 where it is said, وَذٰلِكُمْ ظَنُّكُمُ الَّذِىْ ظَنَنْتُمْ بِرَبِّكُمْ اَرْدٰىكُمْ "And this thought of yours that you conceived

about your Lord brought you to ruin..."

The Evidence of Man's Limbs and organs after Resurrection

According to a narration reported in Ṣaḥīḥ of Muslim Sayyidnā Anas ﷺ says, "One day we were with the Holy Prophet ﷺ when he started laughing. Then he asked us whether we knew why he was laughing. We said that Allah and His Rasūl ﷺ knew best. Then he said "What made me laugh was the dialogue a slave will have with his Lord on the Day of Resurrection. The slave will say, "O my Lord! Did you not give me protection from injustice?" Allah Almighty will say, 'No doubt, I did.' Then this slave will say, 'Since this is so, I would not be satisfied with any evidence in the matter of my accountability, except that some part of my own being stands up as witness.' Allah Almighty will say, كَفٰى بِنَفْسِكَ الْيَوْمَ عَلَيْكَ حَسِيْبًا 'Your own being is enough today to take your account. (17:14)' Then his mouth will be sealed, and his limbs and organs will be asked to tell about his deeds. Every organ would speak up and give true evidence. After that his mouth will be unsealed, and then he will say to his own organs in displeasure, بُعْدًا لَّكُمْ وَسُحْقًا فَعَنْكُنَّ أُنَاضِلُ 'May you be ruined. May you be destroyed; whatever I had done in the world was only to make you comfortable', (whereas you have stated to furnish evidence against me.)

And according to another narration by Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ﷺ, this person's mouth will be sealed, and his thigh will be called to speak and tell about his deeds. Then his thigh, its flesh and bone will all give evidence of his deeds. (Muslim, Maẓharī)

Sayyidnā Ma'qil Ibn Yasār ﷺ has narrated that the Holy Prophet ﷺ has said that every new day calls the humans saying, 'I am a new day, and I shall be a witness to whatever you do today. So you should do some good deed before I come to an end, in order that I may give evidence, because once I am gone, you will never find me again. Similarly, every night gives the same call.' (Al-Qurṭubī, with reference to Abū Nu'aim)

Verses 26 – 29

وَقَالَ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا لَا تَسْمَعُوْا لِهٰذَا الْقُرْاٰنِ وَالْغَوْا فِيْهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ
تَغْلِبُوْنَ ﴿٢٦﴾ فَلَنُذِيْقَنَّ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا عَذَابًا شَدِيْدًا ۙ وَّلَنَجْزِيَنَّهُمْ

اَسْوَاَ الَّذِیْ كَانُوْا یَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿٢٧﴾ ذٰلِكَ جَزَآءُ اَعْدَآءِ اللّٰهِ النَّارُ ۚ لَهُمْ
فِیْهَا دَارُ الْخُلْدِ ؕ جَزَآءًۢ بِمَا كَانُوْا بِاٰیٰتِنَا یَجْحَدُوْنَ ﴿٢٨﴾ وَقَالَ الَّذِیْنَ
كَفَرُوْا رَبَّنَاۤ اَرِنَا الَّذَیْنِ اَضَلّٰنَا مِنَ الْجِنِّ وَالْاِنْسِ نَجْعَلْهُمَا تَحْتَ
اَقْدَامِنَا لِیَكُوْنَا مِنَ الْاَسْفَلِیْنَ ﴿٢٩﴾

And said those who disbelieved, "Do not listen to this Qur'ān, and make noise during its recitation, so that you may overcome." [26] **So, We will certainly make them taste a severe punishment, and will certainly recompense them for the worst of what they used to do.** [27] **That is the recompense of the enemies of Allah– the Fire. For them there is the eternal home, as a recompense for their persistent denial of Our verses.** [28] **And those who disbelieve will say, "Our Lord, show us the two who led us astray, out of the Jinns and the humans, and we will put both of them under our feet, so that they become among the lowest."** [29]

Commentary

لَا تَسْمَعُوْا لِهٰذَا الْقُرْاٰنِ وَالْغَوْا فِیْهِ (Do not listen to this Qur'ān, and make noise during its recitation, - 41:26) When all the efforts of the disbelievers failed in confronting the Holy Qur'ān, they started doing such mischievous acts as mentioned in this verse. Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ has stated that Abū Jahl got his people primed up and ready to make noises whenever Muhammad ﷺ recited the Qur'ān, so that people might not find out what he is saying. Some have said that preparations were made to stop people from listening to the Qur'ān by whistling, clapping and by making all sorts of noises during the recitation.

It is Wājib (necessary) to listen quietly while Qur'ān is being recited; It is infidel's way not to remain quiet.

It is learnt from the above verse that making noises with the intention of creating disturbance in the recitation of the Qur'ān is a sign of disbelief. It is also known that to listen quietly to the recitation of the Qur'ān is *wājib* (necessary) and a sign of faith. It has become a usual practice in our days that people put their radios (and cassette players) on where the Holy Qur'ān is recited with loud voice, which can be heard in about every restaurant and place of gathering, while people go about

their business never paying any attention to the Holy Qur'ān. This practice presents a picture that was a sign of infidels. May Allah Almighty guide Muslims. They should either avoid the recitation of the Holy Qur'ān at such places and on such occasions where people are unable to listen to it, or if they wish to benefit from the blessing of the recitation, they must listen to it quietly and attentively.

Verses 30 – 36

إِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ قَالُوْا رَبُّنَا اللّٰهُ ثُمَّ اسْتَقَامُوْا تَتَنَزَّلُ عَلَيْهِمُ الْمَلٰٓئِكَةُ اَلَّا
تَخَافُوْا وَلَا تَحْزَنُوْا وَاَبْشِرُوْا بِالْجَنَّةِ الَّتِيْ كُنْتُمْ تُوْعَدُوْنَ ﴿٣٠﴾
نَحْنُ اَوْلِيٰٓؤُكُمْ فِي الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا وَفِي الْاٰخِرَةِ ۚ وَلَكُمْ فِيْهَا مَا
تَشْتَهِيْٓ اَنْفُسُكُمْ وَلَكُمْ فِيْهَا مَا تَدَّعُوْنَ ﴿٣١ط﴾ نُزُلًا مِّنْ غَفُوْرٍ رَّحِيْمٍ
﴿٣٢﴾ وَمَنْ اَحْسَنُ قَوْلًا مِّمَّنْ دَعَآ اِلَى اللّٰهِ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا وَّقَالَ
اِنَّنِيْ مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِيْنَ ﴿٣٣﴾ وَلَا تَسْتَوِي الْحَسَنَةُ وَلَا السَّيِّئَةُ ؕ اِدْفَعْ
بِالَّتِيْ هِيَ اَحْسَنُ فَاِذَا الَّذِيْ بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَهٗ عَدَاوَةٌ كَاَنَّهٗ وَلِيٌّ حَمِيْمٌ
﴿٣٤﴾ وَمَا يُلَقّٰىهَآ اِلَّا الَّذِيْنَ صَبَرُوْا ۚ وَمَا يُلَقّٰىهَآ اِلَّا ذُوْ حَظٍّ عَظِيْمٍ
﴿٣٥﴾ وَاِمَّا يَنْزَغَنَّكَ مِنَ الشَّيْطٰنِ نَزْغٌ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللّٰهِ ؕ اِنَّهٗ هُوَ السَّمِيْعُ
الْعَلِيْمُ ﴿٣٦﴾

Surely, those who have declared: "Our Lord is Allah", then remained steadfast, on them the angels will descend, saying, "Do not fear, and do not grieve; and be happy with the good news of the Jannah that you had been promised. [30] We have been your friends in the worldly life, and (will remain as such) in the Hereafter. And for you here is whatever your souls desire, and for you here is whatever you call for [31] – a gift of welcome from the Most-forgiving, the Very-Merciful". [32] And who can be better in words than the one who calls towards Allah, and acts righteously and says, "I am one of those who submit themselves (to Allah)"? [33] And good and evil are not equal. Repel (evil) with what is

best, and you will see that the one you had mutual enmity with him will turn as if he were a close friend. [34] **And no one is blessed with this (attitude) but those who observe patience, and no one is blessed with this (attitude) but a man of great luck.** [35] **And should a stroke from Shaitan (Satan) strike you, seek refuge with Allah. Surely, He is the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing.** [36]

Commentary

Those who rejected the Qur'ān, the prophethood and the Oneness of Allah have been addressed from the beginning of the Sūrah. With reference to the signs of Allah's Omnipotence, they are invited to believe in Oneness of Allah. Mentioned thereafter is the evil fate of those who reject the life hereinafter with a detailed account of the punishment of hell in that life. Now the text takes up, henceforth, the conditions of the believing people and of those having perfect faith, their being honored and exalted in this world and in eternity along with some special directions for them. Believers and those having perfect faith are those people who not only stick to the straight path and abide by the revealed laws themselves in their deeds and morals, but also call others towards Allah and care about their reformation. It is in this connection that those who invite others towards Islam are directed to remain patient and to repay evil with goodness.

The sense of being upright

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا رَبُّنَا اللَّهُ ثُمَّ اسْتَقَامُوا (Surely, those who have declared: "Our Lord is Allah", then remained steadfast - 41:30) This verse has mentioned two qualities of these people. One is affirming Allah as their Lord. This refers to their '*'imān*'(faith). The other quality is of their remaining steadfast which refers to their good deeds. In this way, the verse says that these people combine the true faith with good practice. The word used in the text for this second aspect is *istiqamah* (translated above as being steadfast) which has been taken by Maulānā Thānawi to mean firmness in unshaken faith. This explanation is reported from Sayyidnā Abū Bakr ﷺ. The explanation given by Sayyidnā 'Uthmān ﷺ is nearly the same, as according to him *istiqamah* means *ikhlāṣ* (sincerity) in deeds. And Sayyidnā 'Umar ﷺ has explained *istiqāmah* in the following words,

الاستقامة ان تستقيم على الامروا النهى ولا تروغ روغان الثعالب. (مظهرى)

> *Istiqamah* is that you hold on unwaveringly to all the injunctions of Allah – carry out the good deeds and stay away from prohibitions, and do not seek escape-routes like foxes. (Maẓharī).

That is why scholars have said that *Istiqāmah* is a small word, but it comprises all the revealed laws of Islam which includes carrying out all the orders of Allah and staying away from all prohibitions and odious things on a permanent basis. It is stated in Tafsīr Kashshaf that a person's declaration that his Lord is Allah can only be true when he believes from the bottom of his heart that he is being brought up by Allah Almighty in all situations and at every step, that he cannot take even one breath without His mercy, and all this demands that one should be so devoted and steadfast in his ways of worship that neither his heart nor his body should deviate even to a hair's breadth from submission to Him like a slave.

That is the reason that once the Holy Prophet ﷺ was asked by Sayyidnā Sufyān Ibn 'Abdullāh Thaqafi رضي الله عنه to tell him something so comprehensive about Islam that he should not have to ask anybody else afterwards for anything. The Holy Prophet ﷺ said to him:

قُلْ اٰمَنْتُ بِاللّٰهِ ثُمَّ اسْتَقِم (رواه مسلم)

"Say, 'I have faith in Allah', and then remain steadfast to it."

Remaining steadfast apparently means to hold on firmly to the faith and to the good deeds which the faith demands.

Sayyidnā 'Alī رضي الله عنه and Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه have defined *Istiqāmah* (Steadfastness) as discharge of obligatory duties, and Ḥasan Baṣrī said that *Istiqāmah* is to obey Allah in all deeds, and to avoid His disobedience. This tells us that the above quoted description of *Istiqāmah* given by Sayyidnā 'Umar رضي الله عنه, is the most comprehensive. The descriptions of Sayyidnā Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه and Sayyidnā 'Uthmān رضي الله عنه also result in the above, because sincerity in deeds has been stressed upon by them alongwith good deeds. (Tafsīr Maẓharī). Jaṣṣāṣ has also adopted the above explanation by quoting Abūl 'Āliyah and so has Ibn Jarīr.

تَتَنَزَّلُ عَلَيۡهِمُ الۡمَلٰٓئِكَةُ (on them the angels will descend - 41:30). The descent of angels and their address as mentioned in this verse will take place at the

time of one's death according to Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ, but according to Qatādah, it will take place on the Day of Resurrection at the time of rising from the graves. And according to Waki' Ibn Jarraḥ, it would happen on three occasions, first at the time of death, secondly in the graves, and thirdly on the Day of Resurrection at the time of rising from graves. And Abū Ḥayyān has opined in Al-Baḥr-ul-Muḥīṭ that, in fact, angels keep on descending upon Mu'mins (believers) all the time, even in this life, and their effects and blessings are found in the deeds of the believers; but they will be visible on these occasions only, and it is at that time that the voice of angels will be heard.

Abū Nu'aim has reported about Thābit Al-bunānī رحمه الله تعالى that while reciting Sūrah Ḥa Mīm Sajdah, when he reached the present verse (on them the angels descend), he said, "According to a Ḥadīth that has reached us, the Mu'min at the time of rising in his grave on the Day of Resurrection, will be met by the two angels who used to be with him in the world, and they will console him not to worry or be afraid, rather be happy with the glad tidings of Paradise, which was being promised to him. These words of the angels will bring serenity to the Mu'min. (Maẓharī)

لَكُمْ فِيهَا مَا تَشْتَهِيٓ اَنفُسُكُمْ وَلَكُمْ فِيهَا مَاتَدَّعُوْنَ . نُزُلاً مِّنْ غَفُوْرٍ رَّحِيْمٍ (And for you here is whatever your souls desire, and for you here is whatever you call for. - 41:31,32) In other words, 'all your desires' would be fulfilled whether you request or you don't.' The word used after that is '*nuzulan*'[1] meaning hospitality indicates that many the delights provided to you there will be such that even desire had not entered your heart, as happens to a guest, specially of a great personage, that many such things also are presented to him that the guest had not even imagined. (Maẓharī)

It is stated in a Ḥadīth that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said that in Paradise, if the desire comes into your heart to eat the flesh of a flying bird you are looking at it, it would immediately fall in front of you completely cooked, ready to eat. Some narrations have it that the bird would not have been touched either by fire or smoke, but would come

1. This which originally means 'a thing prepared by a host to be offered to him soon after his arrival'. That is why it is translated by us above as a 'welcome-gift'. But for the sake of brevity and in general usage, it is generally translated as 'hospitality'. Muhammad Taqi Usmani

down already cooked. (Al-Bazzār, Al-Baihaqī – narrated by Ibn Mas'ūd ﷺ – Maẓharī)

In another Ḥadīth, the Holy Prophet ﷺ said that if a Mu'min in Paradise wishes to have a child born in his house, the conception, delivery, weaning, growing into being an adult – all this would take place in a moment. (Tirmidhī, Baihaqī, etc. – Maẓharī)

وَمَنْ اَحْسَنُ قَوْلاً مِّمَّنْ دَعَآ اِلَى اللّٰهِ (And who can be better in words than the one who calls towards Allah, and acts righteously and says, "I am one of those who submit themselves [to Allah]"? - 33) This is the second aspect of the state of the totally obedient Mu'mins, that they not only have faith and carry out good deeds themselves, but they also invite others to do the same. The Qur'ān states that who can say anything better than the one who calls others towards Allah. So we know that the best and most excellent discourse of a man is to call others towards truth. This includes all the ways of calling towards Allah – through the spoken word, through writing or through any other manner. The one who calls *adhān* (call to obligatory prayer) is also included in this category, because he calls others towards prayers. That is why Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضی اللّٰہ عنہا has said that this verse is about mu'adhdhins (those who proclaim *adhān*), and that the words, 'and acts righteously 'after this means offering of two *rak'āt* of prayers between adhan and *iqamah.*

It is narrated in a Ḥadīth that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said that the supplication between *adhān* and *Iqāmah* is not rejected (Abū Dāwūd and Tirmidhī – narrated by Sayyidnā Anas ﷺ – Maẓharī)

The merits and blessings of *adhān* and its reply are very great, as stated in Ṣaḥīḥ *aḥādīth*, provided that the *adhān* is proclaimed purely for Allah, and not for any payment or compensation. These *aḥādīth* have been collected in Tafsīr Maẓharī`.

وَلَا تَسْتَوِى الْحَسَنَةُ وَلَا السَّيِّئَةُ (And good and evil are not equal - 34). The special instructions for those who are engaged in calling others towards Allah commence from here. The gist of these instructions is not to repay evil with evil, but to be patient and to be obliging اِدْفَعْ بِالَّتِىْ هِىَ اَحْسَنُ (Repel (evil) with what is best, - 34) means that the habit of those people who are engaged in calling others towards Allah should be to reply to the evil behavior of the addressees in the best possible manner. No doubt, it is

good not to repay evil with evil and to forgive, but it is much better to do some good to the evil-doer after forgiving him. Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ has said that the instruction in this verse is to be patient with the one who is expressing his anger with you, to be tolerant and forbearing with the one who is being ignorant with you and to forgive the one who has made you suffer. (Maẓharī)

Some narrations have it that someone either abused or reviled Sayyidnā Abū Bakr ﷺ who said to him, 'If what you are saying is true that I am at fault and am bad, then I pray Allah Ta'ālā to forgive me, and if you have told a lie then may Allah Forgive you. (Qurṭubī)

Verses 37 – 39

وَمِنْ اٰيٰتِهِ الَّيْلُ وَالنَّهَارُ وَالشَّمْسُ وَالْقَمَرُ ؕ لَاتَسْجُدُوْا لِلشَّمْسِ وَلَا لِلْقَمَرِ وَاسْجُدُوْا لِلّٰهِ الَّذِىْ خَلَقَهُنَّ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ اِيَّاهُ تَعْبُدُوْنَ ﴿۳۷﴾ فَاِنِ اسْتَكْبَرُوْا فَالَّذِيْنَ عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ يُسَبِّحُوْنَ لَهٗ بِالَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَهُمْ لَايَسْـَٔمُوْنَ ﴿۳۸﴾ السجدة وَمِنْ اٰيٰتِهٖٓ اَنَّكَ تَرَى الْاَرْضَ خَاشِعَةً فَاِذَآ اَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْهَا الْمَآءَ اهْتَزَّتْ وَرَبَتْ ؕ اِنَّ الَّذِىْٓ اَحْيَاهَا لَمُحْىِ الْمَوْتٰى ؕ اِنَّهٗ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَىْءٍ قَدِيْرٌ ﴿۳۹﴾

And among His signs are the night and the day, and the sun and the moon. Do not make *sajdah* (prostration) to the sun, or to the moon. And make *sajdah* to Allah who has created them, if it is Him whom you worship. [37] **Still, if they show arrogance, then those who are with your Lord proclaim His purity night and day, and they do not get weary.** [38] **And among His signs is that you see the land inactive, Then, once We send down water thereto, it gets excited and swells. Surely, the One who has given life to it is the One who gives life to the dead. No doubt, He is powerful to do everything.** [39]

It is Not permissible to prostrate before anyone except Allah Almighty

لَاتَسْجُدُوْا لِلشَّمْسِ وَلَا لِلْقَمَرِ وَاسْجُدُوْا لِلّٰهِ الَّذِىْ خَلَقَهُنَّ (Do not make *sajdah* [prostration] to the sun, or to the moon. And make *sajdah* to Allah who

has created them - 37). It is learnt from this verse that prostration is the right of the Creator of the Universe only. The consensus of the Ummah is that to prostrate before any star, human being, etc. is *ḥarām* (forbidden), whether it is for worship, or just as a gesture of respect and reverence. The only difference is that if someone prostrates before anyone other than Allah with intention to worship him, he becomes an infidel, and the one who prostrates simply as a mark of respect and reverence is not called an infidel, but he is guilty of committing a serious haram act and is a sinner.

Prostration of worship for any being other than Allah has never been lawful for any *Ummah* in any Sharī'ah of any prophet, because it becomes a practice of *shirk* (polytheism) and *shirk* has never been allowed in any code of shari'ah revealed to any prophet. However, prostration in respect and reverence of anyone (with no intention to worshipping him) had been allowed in the codes of shari'ah revealed to some prophets. All the angels were ordered to prostrate before Sayyidnā 'Ādam عليه السلام before he came into this world. It is stated in the Qur'ān that the father and brothers of Sayyidnā Yūsuf عليه السلام prostrated before him. But the jurisprudents of this *Ummah* are unanimous on the point that such a prostration was permissible in the earlier codes only, and it stands abrogated in Islam. Prostration for any being other than Allah has been declared absolutely haram (forbidden). Full details of this issue are given in the author's booklet (المقالة المرضية فى حكم سجدة التحية) *Al-maqalat-ul-marḍiyyah, fī Ḥukmi sajdat-it-taḥiyyah'* in Arabic, and its Urdu translation has also been published.

وَهُمْ لَايَسْئَمُوْنَ (and they do not get weary. - 38) This is one of the verses called 'Verses of *sajdah'* the recitation of which makes it obligatory to perform *sajdah* (prostration) for the one who recites them and the one who listens to them. This *sajdah* is called *sajdah* of *tilawah*. There is consensus of the *Ummah* on the point that *sajdah* of *tilawah* is *wājib* (obligatory) in this Sūrah, but the scholars differ regarding the exact place where it becomes *wājib*. Qāḍī Abū Bakr Ibn-ul-'Arabi has written in Aḥkām-ul-Qur'ān that Sayyidnā 'Alī رضي الله عنه and Sayyidnā Ibn Mas'ūd رضي الله عنه used to prostrate at the end of the verse 37 i.e. at the end of اِنْ كُنْتُمْ اِيَّاهُ تَعْبُدُوْنَ (if it is Him whom you worship.) Imām Mālik has adopted this very stance. Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه, however, used to prostrate at the end of the verse 38 i.e. at the end of لَايَسْئَمُوْنَ (and they do not get weary.)

Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Umar ﷺ has also advised prostration at this place. Masrūq, Abū 'Abdur Raḥmān Sulamī, Ibrāhīm Nakha'ī, Ibn Sīrīn, Qatādah, etc., and most jurists used to prostrate at verse 38, i.e. at the end of لَايَسْئَمُوْنَ. Imām Abū Bakr Jaṣṣāṣ has said in Aḥkām-ul-Qur'ān that this has been the view of all the leading Ḥanafī scholars. He has further said that in view of the differences, it is on the safer side to prostrate at the end of the verse 38, because even if prostration becomes *wājib* at the end of the verse 37, then the obligation would be discharged if it is performed after the recitation of the verse 38, and if it becomes *wājib* at the verse 38, then, the discharge of obligation (if it is performed after verse 38) is more obvious.

Verses 40 – 46

إِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ يُلْحِدُوْنَ فِيْٓ اٰيٰتِنَا لَايَخْفَوْنَ عَلَيْنَا ۗ اَفَمَنْ يُّلْقٰى فِى النَّارِ
خَيْرٌ اَمْ مَّنْ يَّأْتِيْٓ اٰمِنًا يَّوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ ۗ اِعْمَلُوْا مَاشِئْتُمْ ۙ اِنَّهٗ بِمَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ
بَصِيْرٌ ﴿٤٠﴾ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا بِالذِّكْرِ لَمَّا جَآءَهُمْ ۚ وَاِنَّهٗ لَكِتٰبٌ
عَزِيْزٌ ﴿٤١﴾ لَّايَاْتِيْهِ الْبَاطِلُ مِنْۢ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَلَا مِنْ خَلْفِهٖ ۗ تَنْزِيْلٌ مِّنْ
حَكِيْمٍ حَمِيْدٍ ﴿٤٢﴾ مَايُقَالُ لَكَ اِلَّا مَا قَدْ قِيْلَ لِلرُّسُلِ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ ۗ
اِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَذُوْ مَغْفِرَةٍ وَّذُوْعِقَابٍ اَلِيْمٍ ﴿٤٣﴾ وَلَوْ جَعَلْنٰهُ قُرْاٰنًا اَعْجَمِيًّا
لَّقَالُوْا لَوْلَا فُصِّلَتْ اٰيٰتُهٗ ۗ ءَاَعْجَمِيٌّ وَّعَرَبِيٌّ ۗ قُلْ هُوَ لِلَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا
هُدًى وَّشِفَآءٌ ۗ وَالَّذِيْنَ لَايُؤْمِنُوْنَ فِيْٓ اٰذَانِهِمْ وَقْرٌ وَّهُوَ عَلَيْهِمْ عَمًى
ۗ اُولٰٓئِكَ يُنَادَوْنَ مِنْ مَّكَانٍۢ بَعِيْدٍ ﴿٤٤﴾ وَلَقَدْ اٰتَيْنَا مُوْسَى الْكِتٰبَ
فَاخْتُلِفَ فِيْهِ ۗ وَلَوْلَا كَلِمَةٌ سَبَقَتْ مِنْ رَّبِّكَ لَقُضِىَ بَيْنَهُمْ ۗ وَاِنَّهُمْ
لَفِىْ شَكٍّ مِّنْهُ مُرِيْبٍ ﴿٤٥﴾ مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَلِنَفْسِهٖ ۚ وَمَنْ اَسَآءَ
فَعَلَيْهَا ۗ وَمَا رَبُّكَ بِظَلَّامٍ لِّلْعَبِيْدِ ﴿٤٦﴾

Surely those who go crooked about Our signs are not hidden from Us. So, tell me which one is better: the one who is thrown into the Fire, or the one who will come

safely on the Day of Judgment? Do whatever you wish. He is watchful of whatever you do. [40] Surely those who have rejected the advice (the Qur'an) when it came to them (are the ones who go crooked and are not hidden from Us). And surely, it is an unassailable book [41] that cannot be approached by falsehood, neither from its front, nor from its behind _ a revelation from the Wise, the Ever-Praised. [42] Nothing is being said to you but what has been said to the messengers before you. Your Lord is certainly the lord of forgiveness and the lord of painful punishment. [43] And had We made it a non-Arabic Qur'ān, they would have said, "Why are its verses not clearly explained? Is it a non- Arabic (book) and an Arab (messenger)?" [1] Say, "For those who believe, it is guidance and cure. As for those who do not believe, there is deafness in their ears, and for them it is blindness. Such people are being called from a distant place." [44] And We gave Musa the book, then it was disputed (as well). And but for a word that had already come from your Lord, the matter would have been decided between them. And they are in confounding doubt about it. [45] If someone acts righteously, he does so for the benefit of his own soul, and if someone commits evil, he does so against it. And your Lord is not unjust to His slaves. [46]

Commentary

Description and Rules of Ilḥād – A particular kind of *kufr*

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُلْحِدُوْنَ فِيْٓ اٰيٰتِنَا (Surely those who go crooked about Our signs are not hidden from Us.....41:40) In the earlier verses, there were warnings, threats and mention of scourge for those who used to openly deny the Oneness of Allah and the prophethood of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Now a particular kind of denial is being described which is called *'ilḥād'*. The lexical meaning of *'ilḥād'* is to deviate, to incline towards one side, being

(1). This verse was revealed in answer to an objection raised by some people of Quraish who, according to a report of Sa'īd Ibn Jubair reproduced by Suyuṭi in his Ad-Durr-ul-Manthur, had said that some part of the Qur'ān should have been in a language other than Arabic, so that its miraculous nature would have been more pronounced in the sense that an Arab prophet would have been reciting verses in a language he did not know. The gist of the answer given in this verse is that there is no end to such absurd objections. Had Allah revealed the Qur'ān in some other language, they would have come with another objection that it is not understandable, and that an Arab messenger is not supposed to convey his message in any language other than Arabic.

crooked. In the terminology of the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth, *'ilḥād'* means to deviate from the verse of the Holy Qur'ān. Lexically, this word is applicable to both cases of deviation, be it open denial, or through false interpretation. But, generally, the term of *'ilḥād'* is used for a deviation that apparently purports to have faith in the Qur'ān and its verses, but attributes such self-assumed meanings to the Qur'ān that are against the clear and explicit meanings accepted and recognized by the majority of the ummah, and that change the intention of the Qur'ān in its entirety. Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ has given this very meaning of *'ilḥād'* in the explanation of this verse by saying: الالحاد هو وضع الكلام على غير موضعه (*'ilḥād'* is to use a statement at an irrelevant place). The words, لَا يَخْفَوْنَ عَلَيْنَا "are not hidden from Us" in the present verse 40 indicate that *'ilḥād'* was a kind of *'kufr'* that they wanted to hide. So Allah Almighty said that they could not hide their *kufr* (infidelity) from Him.

And this verse has advised clearly that deviation from the verses of the Qur'ān, whether openly in distinct words or by trying to change the injunctions of the Qur'ān through false interpretations, all are *'ilḥād'* and *kufr.*

Briefly, *'ilḥād'* is a kind of hypocritical *kufr* which in appearance claims and admits to have faith in the Qur'ān and its verses, but fabricates meanings of the verses of the Qur'ān which are against the explicit provisions of the Qur'ān, Sunnah and principles of Islam.

Imām Abū Yūsuf has stated in Kitāb-ul-Kharāj:

كذالك الزنادقة الّذين يلحدون وقد كانوا يظهرون الاسلام

"Similar are zindiqs who deviate; and they used to pretend Islam.

This tells us that *zindiq* and *mulḥid* (one who practices *'ilḥād'*) are one and the same. Both words are used for an infidel who outwardly claims to follow Islam, but in reality refuses to obey the injunctions through distortion in the meaning of the Qur'ān against the explicit and definite meanings accepted by the Ummah as a whole.

Removal of a Misunderstanding:

One of the rules described in books of Islamic theology is that a *muta'awwil* (i.e. the one who adheres to a wrong belief on the pretext of a

different interpretation of the Qur'ān and Sunnah) should not be declared to be a *kāfir* or a Non-Muslim. But if this rule is taken to be so general that no matter how false a pretext one applies to even an absolute and certain injunction, one would, however not become a *kāfir* (infidel), then the inevitable consequence would be that none of the polytheists, idolaters, Jews or Christians should be called Non-Muslims or *Kāfir*, because the pretext of the idolaters is stated in the Qur'an itself:

مَانَعْبُدُهُمْ اِلاَّ لِيُقَرِّبُوْنَآ اِلَى اللّٰهِ زُلْفٰى

"And we do not worship them (the idols) but for the reason that they will bring us closer to Allah." (39:3)

The pretext was that they do not worship the idols themselves, but as intercessors to take us nearer to Allah Almighty and as such, in reality, they worship Allah. But the Qur'ān has declared them to be *kāfir*, despite this pretext. The pretexts of Jews and Christians are very well known, despite they have been called *Kāfir* in the explicit verses of Qur'ān and Sunnah. Hence it is established that the rule of not calling a *muta'awwil* as *Kāfir* is not applicable so generally.

Therefore, the scholars and jurisprudents have clarified that the rule mentioned above is subject to a condition that the interpretation in matters relating to the self-evident elements (*Ḍaruriyyat-ud-dīn*) should not be against their definite (*qat'ī*) meanings. Self-evident elements of religion (*Ḍaruriyyat-ud-dīn*) are those injunctions and rules of Islam which are so continuously practiced, established, and well-known that even illiterate and ignorant Muslims are aware of them, such as the obligation of salah five times a day, two *rak'āt* of *ṣalāh* in *fajr* and four *rak'āt* in *ẓuhr* and fasting during the month of Ramaḍān, all being obligatory duties; similarly the prohibition of *ribā'* (usury), alcoholic drinks, pig, etc. If anyone gives such false interpretations of the verses of the Qur'ān pertaining to these matters which perverts their well-known and established meanings accepted by the Muslims throughout the history by way of *tawatur* (uninterrupted), then such a person would, no doubt, by consensus of the *'Ummah*, be a *kāfir*, because he is, in reality, denying the teaching of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. And the definition of *'imān* (faith) recognized by the consensus of *'ummah* is the following:

تَصديق النّبی صلّی اللّٰه عَلیهِ وسَلّم فیما علم مجیئه بهٖ ضرورة

"To believe in whatever is established to be the teaching of the

Holy Prophet ﷺ in a self-evident manner known not only to scholars, but also to the general public.

Therefore, in comparison, the description of *kufr* would be the denial of any of the things mentioned above.

So the person who changes any injunction pertaining to the self-evident elements of the religion through false explanations or pretexts is actually denying the teachings of the Holy Prophet ﷺ.

Since ignorance of and negligence about religion and its injunctions have reached alarming proportions these days, many people who do not know the principles of Sharī'ah, and whatever information they have about Islam is based on what they have learnt from the Western scholars, have started in our days distorting the teachings of Islam by presenting false interpretations of the Holy Qur'ān and Sunnah. Such people often seek help from the rule mentioned above and claim that these interpretations cannot be held as *kufr*.

Therefore, in view of the serious need of the times, my respected teacher Maulānā Muḥammad Anwar Shāh Kashmīrī رحمه الله تعالىٰ has written a book on this issue, which is published with the title of *Ikfar-ul-mulḥidīn*. It has been proved in this book, on the basis of clarifications of scholars and jurisprudents of every school of thought, that in the self-evident elements of religion (*Ḍaruriyyat-ud-dīn*) nobody's pretext is valid, and such a pretext does not protect one from being *kāfir*. This humble writer has summarized the contents of this book in his Urdu booklet (ایمان اور کفر، قرآن کی روشنی میں) *'Imān or kufr Qur'ān kī roshnī meyn'*. The gist of the discussion is given in that book from a writing of Shāh 'Abdul-'Azīz Muḥaddith Dehlawī رحمه الله تعالىٰ in the following way:

He says that false interpretation of the Qur'ān may be of two kinds. One, is an interpretation that goes against the definite, unambiguous texts of the Qur'ān or of the mutawatir *aḥādīth* or of absolute consensus of the *ummah*. This kind of interpretation is *kufr* undoubtedly. The second kind is an interpretation against the texts that are, though clear and semi-certain, are not certain or definite in absolute terms. This kind of false interpretation is not *kufr*, however, it is *fisq* and misguidance. Apart from these two kinds, any interpretation that is based on a possible understanding of the text is the field of the jurists exercising *ijtihād*, and

it carries reward from Allah in any case, as declared by a Ḥadīth.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِالذِّكْرِ لَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ ۖ وَإِنَّهُ لَكِتٰبٌ عَزِيزٌ لَّا يَأْتِيهِ الْبَاطِلُ مِنْ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَلَا مِنْ خَلْفِهِ (Surely those who have rejected the advice, when it came to them [are the ones who go crooked and are not hidden from Us]. And surely, it is an unassailable book that cannot be approached by falsehood, neither from its front, nor from its behind. - 41:41,42) Most Exegetes have stated that the 'advice' in this verse refers to the Qur'ān, and the sentence "those who have rejected the advice when it came to them" is a complement of the former phrase "those who go crooked about Our verse" and hence, according to Arabic grammar, is subject to the same predicate, and thus the meaning is that these people cannot be hidden from Us, and consequently cannot escape the scourge. Further on is stated that the Qur'ān is protected by Allah. إِنَّهُ لَكِتٰبٌ عَزِيزٌ (And surely, it is an unassailable book) meaning that Allah Almighty holds this Book dear and fully protected; no falsehood can enter this Book. (Narrated by Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ – Maẓharī)

لَّا يَأْتِيهِ الْبَاطِلُ مِنْ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَلَا مِنْ خَلْفِهِ (that cannot be approached by falsehood, neither from its front, nor from its behind.) Qatādah and Suddī have stated that *'bāṭil'* (falsehood) in this verse means Shaiṭān (Satan), and 'neither from its front, nor from its behind' means 'from any side'. To sum up, Satan's manipulation and contrivance just do not work on this Book; Satan cannot distort this Book by adding something to it, or deleting something from it.

The author of Tafsīr Maẓharī, after quoting this explanation, has added that Satan here includes the satans both from jinn and from humans – neither can carry out any change or distortion in the Qur'ān. Some *Rawafid*[1].

Abū Ḥayyān has stated in Al-Baḥr-ul-Muḥīṭ that the word *bāṭil* (falsehood) as a word is not specific to Satan; any falsehood or falsifier, whether from Satan or from any other source, cannot succeed in the Qur'ān. Then, referring to Ṭabarī, he has mentioned that this verse means that a disbeliever can neither dare to carry out any change in this

(1) This term is used for the extremists among the Shi'ites who tried to add ten parts (Ajza') and some tried to add some particular verses, but none could succeed.

Book openly, nor can he distort its meaning through *ilḥād* covertly.

The explanation of Tabari is very appropriate here, because there can be only two ways of introducing any distortion or *ilḥād* in the Qur'ān. First, that any disbeliever tries openly to add something to or delete something from the Qur'ān. This has been denoted by the words, 'from its front'. The second way of distortion is that somebody, claiming to have faith, tries to distort the meaning of the Qur'ān covertly through false interpretations. This has been referred to by the words, 'nor from its behind'.

The sense, in nut shell, is that this Book is so noble and protected by Allah that nobody has the power to bring any addition, omission or change in its words, nor can one succeed in bringing any change in the injunctions of the Qur'ān by distorting its meaning. Whenever any wretched person attempted to do so, he had to face ignominy –The Qur'ān remained pure and untouched by his evil plans. As for its protection from open distortion or change, everybody can see that there is no way for anyone to do it, because it is being read and recited throughout the world for the last fourteen centuries, fully memorized by hundreds of thousands of people; if anybody makes even the slightest mistake, the young, the old, the learned scholars, the illiterate – thousands and thousands of Muslims raise their voice for correction. The words 'nor from its behind' in the present verse indicate that the protection of the Qur'ān that has been undertaken by Allah Almighty Himself by saying "And We are there to protect it." (15:9) is not limited to its words only; rather Allah Almighty has ensured that its meanings will remain protected as well. Allah Almighty has so safeguarded even the meaning and injunctions of Qur'ān through His Messenger ﷺ and his direct disciples, the noble Companions ؓ, that if any infidel attempts to distort it through false explanations, thousands of scholars stand up to refute it, and he faces rejection. The fact is that in the verse إِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ (We are there to protect it) the pronoun 'it' points towards the Qur'ān and Qur'ān is not just the name of words, but is the name of both words and meanings.

It is clearly mentioned in correct *aḥādīth* that a group will always remain among Muslims, till Doomsday, who would expose the distortions of those who commit *ilḥād* (false interpretation), and would clarify the correct meaning of the Qur'ān. They may hide their *kufr* from the whole

world, but they cannot hide it from Allah Almighty, and since Allah Almighty is aware of their conspiracy, they are bound to face punishment.

ءَ اَعۡجَمِیٌّ وَّعَرَبِیٌّ (Is it a non- Arabic [book] and an Arab [messenger]? - 44) The original word used for non-Arabic in the text is a'jamiyy (with *ḥamza* before the letter *'ain*) which is an Arabic term for 'ineloquent speech', while '*ajam*' (without *ḥamzah* in its beginning) means any nation other than Arabs. Therefore 'ajamiyy is a person who is non-Arab, even though he may speak eloquently, and a'jamiyy is a person who cannot speak eloquently. (Qurṭubī). The use of the word اَعۡجَمِیٌّ *a'jamiyy* in this verse means that if We had revealed the Qur'ān in any language other than Arabic, then the Quraysh who are the first addressees of the Qur'ān would have complained that they did not understand this Book and would have said wonderingly that the prophet is an 'Arab, but the book is *a'jamiyy* which is ineloquent.

قُلۡ هُوَ لِلَّذِیۡنَ اٰمَنُوۡا هُدًی وَّشِفَآءٌ (Say, "For those who believe, it is guidance and cure. - 44) Two attributes of The noble Qur'ān are stated here. One is that Qur'ān gives guidance – such guidance in all spheres of life as is beneficial and useful for human beings. The second attribute is that the Qur'ān is cure. That it is a cure for spiritual ailments like *kufr, shirk*, arrogance, jealousy, greed, etc. is quite obvious, but is also cure for bodily ailments, as has been proved by experience of treating patients through Qur'ānic prayers which has been successful.

اُولٰٓئِکَ یُنَادَوۡنَ مِنۡ مَّکَانٍۭ بَعِیۡدٍ (Such people are being called from a distant place. - 44) This is a similitude. A person who understands what is being said, the Arabs say to him, اَنۡتَ تَسۡمَعُ مِنۡ قَرِیۡبٍ (you are listening from a near place) and if a person does not understand the discourse, they say to him, اَنۡتَ تُنَادٰی مِنۡ بَعِیۡدٍ (you are being called from a distant place) (Qurṭubī). The meaning is that since these people do not intend to listen and to understand the directions of the Qur'ān, their ears are almost deaf and their eyes are blind, therefore teaching them the Qur'ānic guidance is like calling someone from such a distant place that the voice does not reach his ears.

Verses 47 – 54

اِلَیۡهِ یُرَدُّ عِلۡمُ السَّاعَةِ ؕ وَمَا تَخۡرُجُ مِنۡ ثَمَرٰتٍ مِّنۡ اَکۡمَامِهَا وَمَا

تَحۡمِلُ مِنۡ اُنۡثٰى وَلَا تَضَعُ اِلَّا بِعِلۡمِهٖ ؕ وَيَوۡمَ يُنَادِيۡهِمۡ اَيۡنَ شُرَكَآءِىۡ ۙ
قَالُوۡۤا اٰذَنّٰكَ ۙ مَا مِنَّا مِنۡ شَهِيۡدٍ ﴿٤٧﴾ وَضَلَّ عَنۡهُمۡ مَّا كَانُوۡا يَدۡعُوۡنَ
مِنۡ قَبۡلُ وَظَنُّوۡا مَا لَهُمۡ مِّنۡ مَّحِيۡصٍ ﴿٤٨﴾ لَا يَسۡـَٔمُ الۡاِنۡسَانُ مِنۡ دُعَآءِ
الۡخَيۡرِ ۡ وَاِنۡ مَّسَّهُ الشَّرُّ فَيَـُٔوۡسٌ قَنُوۡطٌ ﴿٤٩﴾ وَلَئِنۡ اَذَقۡنٰهُ رَحۡمَةً مِّنَّا
مِنۡۢ بَعۡدِ ضَرَّآءَ مَسَّتۡهُ لَيَقُوۡلَنَّ هٰذَا لِىۡ ۙ وَمَاۤ اَظُنُّ السَّاعَةَ قَآئِمَةً ۙ
وَّلَئِنۡ رُّجِعۡتُ اِلٰى رَبِّىۡۤ اِنَّ لِىۡ عِنۡدَهٗ لَلۡحُسۡنٰى ۚ فَلَنُنَبِّئَنَّ الَّذِيۡنَ
كَفَرُوۡا بِمَا عَمِلُوۡا ۡ وَلَنُذِيۡقَنَّهُمۡ مِّنۡ عَذَابٍ غَلِيۡظٍ ﴿٥٠﴾ وَاِذَاۤ اَنۡعَمۡنَا
عَلَى الۡاِنۡسَانِ اَعۡرَضَ وَنَاٰ بِجَانِبِهٖ ۚ وَاِذَا مَسَّهُ الشَّرُّ فَذُوۡ دُعَآءٍ
عَرِيۡضٍ ﴿٥١﴾ قُلۡ اَرَءَيۡتُمۡ اِنۡ كَانَ مِنۡ عِنۡدِ اللّٰهِ ثُمَّ كَفَرۡتُمۡ بِهٖ مَنۡ
اَضَلُّ مِمَّنۡ هُوَ فِىۡ شِقَاقٍۢ بَعِيۡدٍ ﴿٥٢﴾ سَنُرِيۡهِمۡ اٰيٰتِنَا فِى الۡاٰفَاقِ وَفِىۡۤ
اَنۡفُسِهِمۡ حَتّٰى يَتَبَيَّنَ لَهُمۡ اَنَّهُ الۡحَقُّ ؕ اَوَلَمۡ يَكۡفِ بِرَبِّكَ اَنَّهٗ عَلٰى
كُلِّ شَىۡءٍ شَهِيۡدٌ ﴿٥٣﴾ اَلَاۤ اِنَّهُمۡ فِىۡ مِرۡيَةٍ مِّنۡ لِّقَآءِ رَبِّهِمۡ ؕ اَلَاۤ اِنَّهٗ
بِكُلِّ شَىۡءٍ مُّحِيۡطٌ ﴿٥٤﴾

To Him alone is referred the knowledge of the Hour (the exact time of Doomsday).[1] And no fruits come out of their sheaths, nor does a female conceive a baby, nor does she deliver it, but with His knowledge. And (remember) the day He will call them (saying), "Where are My partners?" They will say, "We declare to you that no one of us is to testify (that you have partners)." [47] And lost to them will be whatever they used to invoke earlier, and they will realize that they have no

(1) It means that whenever a question is asked about the exact time when the Day of Judgment will come, the answer is to be referred to Allah Ta'ala alone, because no one except Him has the knowledge about it. The next verse has mentioned that Allah's exclusive knowledge is not restricted to the Day of Judgment. He knows every minute event that takes place in this world, like the fruits coming out of their sheaths, and the women conceiving and delivering their babies; nothing happens in this world without His knowledge.

way to escape. [48] And man[1] does not get weary of craving for (all sorts of) good things; and if he is touched by some evil, he is disappointed, devoid of any hope. [49] And if We give him a taste of some mercy from Us after some hardship has touched him, he is sure to say, "This is my right. And I do not think the Hour (Hereafter) is going to occur. And even if I am brought back to my Lord, I will have the best (life) with Him (too)." So, We will let the disbelievers know what they did, and let them taste a stern punishment. [50] And when We bestow Our favour upon man, he avoids (to appreciate it) and keeps himself far aside (from obedience), and when some evil touches him, he is full of broad prayers. [51] Say (to the disbelievers), " Tell me, if it (the Qur'ān) is from Allah, and still you reject it, then who can be more erroneous than him who is (involved) in far reaching schism?" [52] We will show them Our signs in the universe and within their own beings until it will become manifest to them that it is the truth. Is it not enough about your Lord that He is witness to everything? [53] Beware, they are in doubt about meeting their Lord. Beware, He is the One who encompasses everything. [54]

Commentary

فَذُوْ دُعَآءٍ عَرِيْضٍ (he is full of broad prayers - 51.) The nature of an infidel is being stated here that when Allah Almighty bestows upon him the good things: wealth, honor and peace, the infidel gets so involved in them and so intoxicated with them that he becomes even more distant from the true Benefactor, Allah Almighty, and his pride and heedlessness increase even more. But when he faces some distress, then he starts long and lengthy supplications to Allah Almighty. Here the Qur'ān has used the word 'broad' to describe their lengthy supplications, because what is wider will automatically be longer too. That is why, when describing the span of Paradise, Allah Almighty has used the word عَرْضُهَا السَّمٰوٰتُ وَالْاَرْضُ (a paradise the width of which spans the heavens and the earth - 3: 133)

Lengthy supplications in themselves are praiseworthy and desirable as is proved by authentic *aḥādīth* about the etiquettes of supplication

(1). 'Man' here refers to a man who does not believe in Allah or in His Oneness. The purpose of the verse is to mention some evil effects that disbelief or kufr brings to the nature of a man, that is, he becomes greedy, ungrateful in his good times and totally dismayed in hardships.

where it is mentioned that, while praying to Allah Ta'ālā, beseeching tearfully and repeatedly is desirable. (Bukhārī and Muslim) Therefore, the denunciation of the infidel is actually not for lengthy supplications, but for his mean disposition that when Allah blesses him with His bounties, he gets intoxicated with arrogance and pride, and when he faces distress, he keeps on praying in a way of wailing and complaining about his difficulties, as is the habit of heedless people; the intent is not to supplicate, but to wail about his misfortunes and to keep on telling the people about it. (Allah knows best)

سَنُرِيْهِمْ اٰيٰتِنَا فِى الْاٰفَاقِ وَفِىْٓ اَنْفُسِهِمْ (We will show them Our signs in the universe and within their own beings - 53). The word *''Afaq'* used in the text literally means 'horizons' which includes all sides of the whole universe. (That is why it is translated above as 'universe') In other words, if one looks at the creatures and creations of the whole universe, big and small, in the skies, on the earth and in between them, they all bear witness not only to the existence of Allah Ta'ālā, but also to His Knowledge, His all-encompassing authority, and to His being One and unique. If one looks even nearer, at one's own self, at each organ and limb, at the fine and fragile mechanisms and systems functioning inside him to provide ease and comfort, it simply leaves one wondering. And these fragile mechanisms and systems have been made so durable that they do not wear out even after seventy, eighty year's use. Look at the springs inside the joints. Had they been made of steel by humans, they would have been rendered unserviceable long ago. Look at the skin of the hands and then lines made thereon that last for the whole life, and yet do not wear out. If a person of even an ordinary intellect ponders over these matters, he is bound to believe that the Creator and Sustainer of all these things is a Being who has limitless knowledge and Authority, and there simply cannot be anyone like Him.[1]

Alhamdulillah
the commentary on
Sūrah Ḥāmīm As-Sajdah
ends here.

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(1). The words used in the text are, "We will show them Our signs" which indicate that the the signs of Allah's power and majesty that have been manifested to the mankind so far are not the only signs of Allah. In fact Allah Ta'ālā will continue to show His signs, both in the universe and in man's own creation, up to the Day of Judgment. Thus the present verse covers all the new discoveries of science that man is able to reach till the end of the universe.

Sūrah Shūrā

Sūrah Shūrā was revealed in Makkah and has 53 Verses and 5 Sections

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 – 9

حٰمٓ ﴿١﴾ عٓسٓقٓ ﴿٢﴾ كَذٰلِكَ يُوْحِيْٓ اِلَيْكَ وَاِلَى الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ ۙ
اللّٰهُ الْعَزِيْزُ الْحَكِيْمُ ﴿٣﴾ لَهٗ مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَا فِي الْاَرْضِ ۭ وَهُوَ
الْعَلِيُّ الْعَظِيْمُ ﴿٤﴾ تَكَادُ السَّمٰوٰتُ يَتَفَطَّرْنَ مِنْ فَوْقِهِنَّ وَالْمَلٰۗىِٕكَةُ
يُسَبِّحُوْنَ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّهِمْ وَيَسْتَغْفِرُوْنَ لِمَنْ فِي الْاَرْضِ ۭ اَلَآ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ
هُوَ الْغَفُوْرُ الرَّحِيْمُ ﴿٥﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ اتَّخَذُوْا مِنْ دُوْنِهٖٓ اَوْلِيَاۗءَ اللّٰهُ حَفِيْظٌ
عَلَيْهِمْ ۖ وَمَآ اَنْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ بِوَكِيْلٍ ﴿٦﴾ وَكَذٰلِكَ اَوْحَيْنَآ اِلَيْكَ قُرْاٰنًا
عَرَبِيًّا لِّتُنْذِرَ اُمَّ الْقُرٰى وَمَنْ حَوْلَهَا وَتُنْذِرَ يَوْمَ الْجَمْعِ لَا رَيْبَ فِيْهِ ۭ
فَرِيْقٌ فِي الْجَنَّةِ وَفَرِيْقٌ فِي السَّعِيْرِ ﴿٧﴾ وَلَوْ شَاۗءَ اللّٰهُ لَجَعَلَهُمْ اُمَّةً
وَّاحِدَةً وَّلٰكِنْ يُّدْخِلُ مَنْ يَّشَاۗءُ فِيْ رَحْمَتِهٖ ۭ وَالظّٰلِمُوْنَ مَا لَهُمْ مِّنْ
وَّلِيٍّ وَّلَا نَصِيْرٍ ﴿٨﴾ اَمِ اتَّخَذُوْا مِنْ دُوْنِهٖٓ اَوْلِيَاۗءَ ۚ فَاللّٰهُ هُوَ الْوَلِيُّ
وَهُوَ يُحْيِ الْمَوْتٰى ۡ وَهُوَ عَلٰي كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيْرٌ ﴿٩﴾

Ḥā Mīm [1] 'Ayn Sīn Qāf [2]. This is how Allah, the Mighty, the Wise, sends revelation to you and to those who were before you. [3] To him belongs all that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth. And He is the

High, the Supreme. [4] The heavens almost burst apart from their above side, and the angels proclaim the purity and praise of their Lord, and pray for the forgiveness of those on the earth. Be aware that Allah is the Most-Forgiving, the Very-Merciful. [5] And those who have adopted patrons instead of Him, Allah is on watch against them, and you are not responsible for them. [6] And thus We have revealed to you an Arabic Qur'ān, so that you may warn the town that is the mother of all towns, and those around it, and warn (them) of the Day of Gathering, about which there is no doubt_(when) one group of people will be in Paradise, and another group in the blazing Fire. [7] And had Allah willed, He would have made all of them a single group; but He admits whomsoever He wills into His mercy. As for the wrongdoers, they have neither a patron nor a helper. [8] Is it that they have adopted patrons instead of Him? So, it is Allah who is the Patron, and He gives life to the dead, and He is Powerful to do every thing. [9]

Commentary

(Ḥā Mīm 'Ayn Sīn Qāf) Only Allah knows the meaning of these letters. The gist of the first five verses is as follows:

Just as this surah was revealed to the Holy Prophet ﷺ for the ascertainment of the religious principles and for other benefits, similarly Allah Ta'ālā, has been sending other prophets who preceded him. His Magnificience is such that whatever there is in the heavens and in the earth is His. He is the Supreme, the Most Magnificent. Even though some of the people of this world do not recognize and do not admit the greatness of His magnificence, yet the number of the angels in the heavens, who know Him and recognize His greatness, is so large that their load may, quite likely, cause the heavens to burst apart from above. A hadith narrated in Tirmidhī and Ibn Mājah states that due to the large number of the angels, such crackling sounds are produced in the heavens as are produced when an excessive load is placed on something. And that is how it should be, because throughout the heavens there is not even a space of four fingers left vacant by angels who are in the state of prostration.

يَتَفَطَّرْنَ (burst apart). It has been stated in the above hadith that the load of angels began producing such crackling sounds in the heavens as are produced when excessive load is placed on something. This tells us that angels have weight and this is not beyond reason, because it is

confirmed that angels also have physical bodies, even though very light in weight. And even light bodies add up to a considerable load when they are in huge numbers. (Bayān-ul-Qur'ān)

These angels in the heavens proclaim the perfection of their Lord and utter His praises. They also ask for forgiveness of the dwellers of this earth who do not give what is due to Allah's greatness, rather indulge in associating others with Him and in infidelity and hence become liable to suffer scourge. Their asking for forgiveness for disbelievers is for a limited period only and is a supplication that some severe worldly scourge may not befall the humans which may destroy all of them; their safety against ordinary punishments of this world and the real scourge of the Hereafter are not included in this supplication. And Allah, the Almighty accepts this supplication, and saves them from the general scourge in this world. It must be understood thoroughly that Allah and Allah alone is the forgiver and Merciful although this forgiveness of infidels is for a limited duration and is limited to this world only.

لِتُنْذِرَ اُمَّ الْقُرٰى (So that you may warn the town that is the mother of all towns) – *Umm-ul- Qurā* (mother of all the towns) means the origin and foundation of all habitations and cities which is Makkah. This title has been given to this city because, to Allah Almighty, it is more distinguished and more excellent than all other cities, habitations and the whole earth. Imam Ahmad has narrated in Musnad, with the authority of Sayyidnā 'Adiyy Ibn Ḥamrā' Az-zuhrī ﷺ that he heard the Messenger of Allah ﷺ at a market of Makkah when he ﷺ was migrating from the city. He was addressing Makkah in the following words:

انك لخير ارض اللّٰه واحبّ ارض اللّٰهِ اِلَيَّ ولو لا اِنّى اُخرجْت منك لما خرجت

> "To me, you are better and dearer than the whole of Allah's earth; if I had not been expelled from your vicinity, I would never have left it of my own accord." (At-tirmidhī, An-Nasa'ī, Ibn Mājah – rated as 'ḥasan ṣaḥīḥ' by Tirmidhī)

وَمَنْ حَوْلَهَا – means the suburbs in the neighborhood of Makkah Mukarramah; it could mean the neighboring Arab countries as well as the whole of the earth from east to west.

Verses 10 – 12

وَمَا اخْتَلَفْتُمْ فِيهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ فَحُكْمُهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ ۚ ذَٰلِكُمُ اللَّهُ رَبِّي عَلَيْهِ
تَوَكَّلْتُ وَإِلَيْهِ أُنِيبُ ﴿١٠﴾ فَاطِرُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۚ جَعَلَ لَكُمْ
مِّنْ أَنفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا وَمِنَ الْأَنْعَامِ أَزْوَاجًا ۖ يَذْرَؤُكُمْ فِيهِ ۚ لَيْسَ
كَمِثْلِهِ شَيْءٌ ۖ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ ﴿١١﴾ لَهُ مَقَالِيدُ السَّمَاوَاتِ
وَالْأَرْضِ ۖ يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَن يَشَاءُ وَيَقْدِرُ ۚ إِنَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ
﴿١٢﴾

And (Say O prophet to your opponents,) "Whatever dispute you have in any matter, its judgment lies with Allah. That One is Allah, the Lord of mine; in Him alone I have placed my trust, and to Him alone I turn (in every matter)." [10] **He is the Creator of the heavens and the earth. He has made for you pairs from among yourselves, and pairs from the cattle. He makes you expand in this way. Nothing is like Him. And He is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing.** [11] **To Him belong the keys of the heavens and the earth. He extends provision for whomsoever He wills and straitens (it for whomsoever He wills). Surely He is All-Knowing in respect of every thing.** [12]

Commentary

وَمَا اخْتَلَفْتُمْ فِيهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ فَحُكْمُهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ (Whatever dispute you have in any matter, its judgment lies with Allah. - 10) It means that the judgement in all those matters in which you dispute lies with Allah, because the sovereignty belongs to Allah only, as stated in another verse: إِنِ الْحُكْمُ إِلَّا لِلَّهِ (The Decision belongs to none but Allah - 6:57). The direction in many verses to obey Rasūlullāh ﷺ and in some verses to obey those in authority does not contradict the above, because the orders of Rasūlullāh ﷺ and of the authorities are also, in a way, orders of Allah. If the order has been received through '*waḥy*' or based upon the clear and definite verses (*nuṣūṣ*) of the Qur'ān and *sunnah,* then its being an order of Allah is obvious. And if the order is an '*ijtihād*' (inference) which in turn is based upon *nusus* of Qur'ān and sunnah, then also, in a way, it is an order of Allah. '*Ijtihadāt*' (plural of '*ijtihād*') of the '*mujtahidīn*' of the

ummah (those who are competent to interpret the Qur'ān and Sunnah, and infer Islamic laws from them) on this basis, are included in orders of Allah. That is why the learned scholars have declared that the *fatwā* (ruling) given by a '*muftī*' (A competent Islamic scholar) is to be taken as a part of the religious law by the common masses who do not have the ability to understand the Qur'ān and the sunnah directly.

Verses 13 –15

شَرَعَ لَكُمْ مِّنَ الدِّيْنِ مَا وَصّٰى بِهٖ نُوْحًا وَّالَّذِيْٓ اَوْحَيْنَآ اِلَيْكَ وَمَا
وَصَّيْنَا بِهٖٓ اِبْرٰهِيْمَ وَمُوْسٰى وَعِيْسٰٓى اَنْ اَقِيْمُوا الدِّيْنَ وَلَا تَتَفَرَّقُوْا فِيْهِ
ط كَبُرَ عَلَى الْمُشْرِكِيْنَ مَا تَدْعُوْهُمْ اِلَيْهِ ط اَللّٰهُ يَجْتَبِيْٓ اِلَيْهِ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ
وَيَهْدِيْٓ اِلَيْهِ مَنْ يُّنِيْبُ ﴿١٣﴾ وَمَا تَفَرَّقُوْٓا اِلَّا مِنْۢ بَعْدِ مَا جَآءَهُمُ
الْعِلْمُ بَغْيًۢا بَيْنَهُمْ ط وَلَوْلَا كَلِمَةٌ سَبَقَتْ مِنْ رَّبِّكَ اِلٰٓى اَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى
لَّقُضِيَ بَيْنَهُمْ ط وَاِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ اُوْرِثُوا الْكِتٰبَ مِنْۢ بَعْدِهِمْ لَفِيْ شَكٍّ مِّنْهُ
مُرِيْبٍ ﴿١٤﴾ فَلِذٰلِكَ فَادْعُ ج وَاسْتَقِمْ كَمَآ اُمِرْتَ ج وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ
اَهْوَآءَهُمْ ج وَقُلْ اٰمَنْتُ بِمَآ اَنْزَلَ اللّٰهُ مِنْ كِتٰبٍ ج وَاُمِرْتُ لِاَعْدِلَ
بَيْنَكُمْ ط اَللّٰهُ رَبُّنَا وَرَبُّكُمْ ط لَنَآ اَعْمَالُنَا وَلَكُمْ اَعْمَالُكُمْ ط لَا حُجَّةَ
بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمْ ط اَللّٰهُ يَجْمَعُ بَيْنَنَا ج وَاِلَيْهِ الْمَصِيْرُ ﴿١٥﴾

He has ordained for you the same religion as He had enjoined upon Nūḥ, and that which We have revealed to you, and that which We had enjoined upon Ibrāhīm and Mūsā and 'Īsā by saying, " Establish the religion, and be not divided therein." Arduous for the *mushriks* (polytheists) is that to which you are inviting them. Allah chooses (and pulls) toward Himself anyone He wills, and guides to Himself anyone who turns to Him (to seek guidance). [13] And they were not divided, in jealousy with each other, but after the knowledge had come to them. And had it not been for a word that had come forth earlier from your Lord (and was effective) until a specified time, the matter would have been decided between them. And those who were made to

inherit the Book after them are in confounding doubt about it. [14] **So, (O prophet,) towards that (faith) invite (people), and be steadfast as you are commanded, and do not follow their desires, and say, "I believe in whatever book Allah has sent down. And I have been ordered to do justice among you. Allah is our Lord and your Lord. For us are our deeds, and for you, your deeds. There is no argumentation between us and you. Allah will bring us together, and to Him is the final return."** [15]

Commentary

شَرَعَ لَكُمْ مِّنَ الدِّيْنِ مَاوَصّٰى بِهٖ نُوْحًا (He has ordained for you the same religion as He had enjoined upon Nūḥ-- 42:13) Allah Almighty's obvious and material blessings were stated in the previous verses. Stated from here are the inner and spiritual blessings. That is, He has blessed you with that very cogent and infallible religion which has been common between all the prophets عليهم السلام. Five of the prophets عليهم السلام have been mentioned in the verse. Sayyidnā Nūḥ عليه السلام has been mentioned first, and our Prophet ﷺ in the end, while Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام in the middle, because he is the father of prophets and was accepted as a prophet even by Arabs, despite their *'kufr'* and *'shirk'*. Sayyidnā Mūsā and 'Īsā عليهما السلام have been mentioned after him, because their followers were the ones who were present when Qur'ān was being revealed. These five prophets عليهم السلام are also the ones named in Sūrah Aḥzāb where the covenant of the prophets given to Allah is mentioned, the difference being that the last of the Prophet ﷺ has been mentioned before Sayyidnā Nūḥ عليه السلام in Sūrah Aḥzāb, whereas Sayyidnā Nūḥ عليه السلام has been mentioned before our Prophet ﷺ in the present surah. Perhaps this is to indicate that although the last of the Prophets ﷺ was born and sent as a prophet after all other prophets, yet he preceded everyone else in the originally destined (*azalī*) distribution of prophethood and messengership. This has been stated in a Ḥadīth: 'I preceded all the other prophets in the original creation and I am last of all the prophets in being sent." (Reported by Ibn Mājah, Dārimī, from Bahz Ibn Ḥakīm, and rated as *'ḥasan'*—See Mishkāh)

Now the question arises that the very first prophet is Sayyidnā 'Ādam عليه السلام, but the mention of prophets عليهم السلام does not commence with his name. The reason is that Sayyidnā 'Ādam عليه السلام was the first prophet to have come in this world, and although he has commonality in principles of

beliefs and important features of faith, yet during his period, no *'kufr'* and *'shirk'* had appeared in the people. Confrontation with *'kufr'* and *'shirk'* commenced with Sayyidnā Nūḥ عليه السلام, who is the first prophet to have faced such problems which were to be faced by later prophets, and as such Sayyidnā Nūḥ عليه السلام has been mentioned first. (Allah knows best).

اَنْ اَقِيْمُوا الدِّيْنَ وَلَا تَتَفَرَّقُوْا فِيْهِ (Establish the religion, and be not divided therein. - 42:13). – This is an explanation of the preceding sentence which means that the *'dīn'* (religion) which is common to all the prophets and in which all are agreed has to be established and maintained; opposing this religion or creating differences in it is not only impermissible, but also liable to a destructive end.

Establishing the Dīn is obligatory Duty and Dissension in it is forbidden

Two orders have been given in this verse – one, 'Establish the religion' and the second, 'Be not divided therein.' which forbids dissension in religion. This sentence is preceded by the word *'an'* which has been translated above as, 'by saying'. As such, this is an explanation of the word, 'ordained' occurring in the beginning. Therefore the word 'din' (religion) in this verse means the same *'dīn'* which has been common between all the prophets, and which calls for adherence to the belief in Oneness of Allah, prophethood, the life after death, and to the principles of worship as *ṣalāh*, fasting, *ḥajj* and *zakāh;* it forbids theft, robbery, adultery, telling of lies, deceit, hurting others without a valid reason, breach of promise – all these have been common injunctions between all divine religions.

On the other hand, It is also proved through an unambiguous verse of the Qur'ān لِكُلٍّ جَعَلْنَا مِنْكُمْ شِرْعَةً وَّمِنْهَاجًا (For each of you We have made a way and a method - 5:48) that there are ancillary differences in the details of the revealed laws of different prophets عليهم السلام. In the light of all these facts taken together, it becomes clear that the order of establishing the religion and prohibition of dissension pertains to those divine laws which have been common and consistent in the codes of all the prophets عليهم السلام – It is these injunctions in which creating differences is forbidden.

Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd رضي الله عنه states that one day Rasūlullāh ﷺ drew a straight line in front of us, and then drew other small lines on the

right and left of the straight line and said that the lines on the right and left were the ways invented by devils, and each of those ways is controlled by a Shaiṭān (Satan) who incites people to follow that path; and then, pointing towards the straight line, he said وَاَنَّ هٰذَا صِرَاطِىْ مُسْتَقِيْمًا فَاتَّبِعُوْهُ (And this my path, straight. So follow it - 6:153.) (Aḥmad, An-Nasa'ī, Dārimī – Maẓharī)

The straight path in the above simile means the same path of true *'dīn'* (religion) which has been common to all the prophets ﷺ creating diversions in it is to create differences which is forbidden and an act of Shaiāṭāns (Satan). Correct *aḥādīth* strictly forbid creating differences in such injunctions which are unanimously agreed. The Holy Prophet ﷺ said من فارق الجماعة شبرا فقد خلع ربقة الاسلام من عنقه (Aḥmad, Abū Dāwūd) meaning that the person who moves away even one span from the general body of Muslims has taken out the neck-band of Islamic beliefs from his neck. Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ has stated that Rasūlullāh ﷺ said يَدُ اللّٰهِ على الجماعة (Tirmidhī, with rating as *'hasan'*) meaning that Allah's hand is upon the general body. Sayyidnā Mu'ādh Ibn Jabal ؓ has narrated that Rasūlullāh ﷺ said that for humans, Shaiāṭān (Satan) is like a wolf after a herd of goats, catching hold of the goat which has strayed away from the herd. Therefore you should stay with the general body, and do not separate yourself. (Aḥmad, as quoted by Tafsīr Maẓharī)

Differences in the ancillaries between leading *Mujtahidin* is not covered by the dissension forbidden in this verse

It is obvious from the above that differences of opinions between leading *'mujtahidīn'* in ancillary matters where express injunctions are not found in the Qur'ān and *aḥādīth* or where there is an apparent contradiction between the *nusus* of the Qur'ān and *aḥādīth* and where opinions are bound to differ, do not bear any relation to the forbidden dissension. Such differences have been continuing since the days of the Holy Prophet ﷺ starting with the noble companions ؓ themselves and are considered to be blessings by the jurisprudents unanimously.

Establishing *'dīn'* that has been obligated in this verse means to hold on to the rules of religion steadfastly, not to let any doubt or distrust creep into it and not to give it up in any case. (Qurṭubī)

كَبُرَ عَلَى الْمُشْرِكِيْنَ مَاتَدْعُوْهُمْ اِلَيْهِ (Arduous for the *mushriks* (Polytheists) is that to which you are inviting them - 42:13). Addressing the Holy Prophet

ﷺ, the verse says, 'Your call to the belief in Oneness of Allah, which is the foundation of the true religion, seems very difficult to the polytheists, although it has been proved to be true through the consensus of all the prophets, because they follow their desires and the teachings of the Shaiṭān (Satan), and have therefore strayed from the right path, which is prohibited as mentioned above.

اَللّٰهُ يَجْتَبِيْٓ اِلَيْهِ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ وَيَهْدِيْٓ اِلَيْهِ مَنْ يُّنِيْبُ (Allah chooses [and pulls] towards Himself anyone He wills and guides anyone who turns to Him. - 42:13). There are only two ways for one to have the straight path. One is that Allah Almighty himself selects him for the straight path of His religion and moulds his nature and inclinations accordingly, which happens in the case of prophets and His special friends. It is about them that Qur'ān states اِنَّآ اَخْلَصْنٰهُمْ بِخَالِصَةٍ ذِكْرَى الدَّارِ (We them chose for a trait of remembering the [eternal] Home [in the Hereafter] - 38:46). The Holy Qur'ān has used the word, *'mukhlaṣīn'* for some particular prophets which means 'chosen'. This peculiar way of guidance has been mentioned in the first sentence of the present verse which says, اَللّٰهُ يَجْتَبِيْٓ اِلَيْهِ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ "Allah chooses [and pulls] towards Himself anyone He wills." This method of instruction is exceptional and limited. The other method which is general for getting guidance is that when someone turns towards Allah and intends to follow His *'dīn'*, then Allah Almighty guides him towards His *'dīn'*. This way of guidance is referred to in the second sentence of the verse which says, وَيَهْدِيْٓ اِلَيْهِ مَنْ يُّنِيْبُ "...and guides anyone who turns to Him."

The reason why the *mushrikīn* (polytheists) of Makkah found it difficult to accept the invitation towards the faith in Oneness of Allah is that they did not even have the intention of understanding and following the truth.

وَمَا تَفَرَّقُوْٓا اِلَّا مِنْۢ بَعْدِ مَا جَآءَهُمُ الْعِلْمُ (And they were not divided, in jealousy with each other, but after knowledge had come to them - 42:14). Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه has explained that the pronoun 'they' in this sentence refers to the Quraysh of Makkah, and thus he has taken the verse to mean that the aversion of the infidels of Quraysh to the straight path was in itself a matter of utter ignorance, but on top of it they did so even after knowledge had been imparted by Allah. Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās has held the coming of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ who was the source of all Divine knowledge, to be the imparting of knowledge by Allah. Some scholars,

however, have referred the pronoun 'they' towards the past *ummahs,* and held the meaning to be that the people of the bygone *ummahs* created dissension in the true faith of their respective prophets, and adopted separate ways despite their having received the knowledge of the stright path from then prophets عليهم السلام.

Be that as it may, the pagans of Makkah and the infidels of the early ages, both demanded that their prophets should also follow the misguidance they themselves had adopted. Therefore the Holy Prophet ﷺ has been addressed in the following verse as follows:

فَلِذٰلِكَ فَادْعُ ۚ وَاسْتَقِمْ كَمَآ اُمِرْتَ ۚ وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ اَهْوَآءَهُمْ ۚ وَقُلْ اٰمَنْتُ بِمَآ اَنْزَلَ اللّٰهُ مِنْ كِتٰبٍ ۚ وَاُمِرْتُ لِاَعْدِلَ بَيْنَكُمْ ۗ اَللّٰهُ رَبُّنَا وَرَبُّكُمْ ۗ لَنَآ اَعْمَالُنَا وَلَكُمْ اَعْمَالُكُمْ ۗ لَا حُجَّةَ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمْ ۗ اَللّٰهُ يَجْمَعُ بَيْنَنَا ۚ وَاِلَيْهِ الْمَصِيْرُ

"So, (O prophet,) towards that (faith) invite (people), and be steadfast as you are commanded, and do not follow their desires, and say, "I believe in whatever book Allah has sent down. And I have been ordered to do justice among you. Allah is our Lord and your Lord. For us are our deeds, and for you, your deeds. There is no argumentation between us and you. Allah will bring us together, and to Him is the final return." (42:15)

Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Kathīr has stated that this verse comprises ten sentences, and each sentence carries a specific order. As such, ten types of precepts are stated in this one verse. No other verse in the entire Qur'ān has this peculiarity, except *'Āyat-ul-kursiyy* which comprises ten types of precepts as well.

The first order فَلِذٰلِكَ فَادْعُ (So, O Prophet, towards that faith invite people) means: 'Although your call towards *'tauḥīd'* (Oneness of Allah) sits very heavy on the polytheists, it is no cause for you to give up your invitational call, and you should continue with it.

The second order وَاسْتَقِمْ كَمَآ اُمِرْتَ (and be steadfast as you are commanded) says, 'You yourself ought to stand firm in the religion towards which you are inviting other people. This firmness has to be in accordance with the command of Allah, that is, to be on the moderate side in your beliefs, deeds, morals, habits and social behavior – there should not be even the slightest inclination towards the extremes of *ifrāt* (overdoing something) or *tafrīṭ* (falling short in something). Obviously

such a firmness is not easy. That is why when some noble companions ﷽ pointed out to the Holy Prophet ﷺ that some of hairs have turned grey, he said, "Sūrah Hūd has turned me old." This very order (of standing firm as commanded) has been given in Sūrah Hūd also in the same very words. (The meaning of standing firm, the difficulties in observing it and its importance are discussed in detail in the commentary on Sūrah Hūd on page 673 of volume 4 of Ma'āriful Qur'ān).

The third command وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ اَهْوَآءَهُمْ (do not follow their desires -) directs the Holy Prophet ﷺ not to be concerned about the opposition of any opponent in his duty of propagation.

The fourth command قُلْ اٰمَنْتُ بِمَآ اَنْزَلَ اللّٰهُ مِنْ كِتَابٍ (and say "I believe in whatever book Allah has sent down") is to announce that the Holy Prophet ﷺ believes not only in the Book that has been revealed to him, but he believes in all the former divine books.

The fifth command اُمِرْتُ لِاَعْدِلَ بَيْنَكُمْ (I have been ordered to do justice among you) apparently relates to doing justice in the matters of dispute brought to him. But some exegetes have taken the meaning of *'adl'* to be 'equality' and thus have taken the sentence to mean that he should treat all the commands of religion equally by believing in all the prophets عليهم السلام, in all the Books and by obeying all the Divine laws without any exception.

The sixth sentence اَللّٰهُ رَبُّنَا is 'Allah is our Lord and you Lord.' which means that all of us are nourished by Allah.

The seventh sentence لَنَآ اَعْمَالُنَا وَلَكُمْ اَعْمَالُكُمْ (For us are our deeds and for you, your deeds) states that our deeds would be for us only and you would neither gain nor lose due to our deeds, and your deeds would be for you only and we would neither gain nor lose due to your deeds. Some exegetes have stated that this verse was revealed in Makkah before the command for *jihād* with non-muslims was revealed; the verses conveying the command for *jihād* have cancelled this command, because the essence of *jihād* is to subjugate those people by fighting who do not accept the advice and exhortation – not to let them remain in the state of *kufr*. And some exegetes have stated that this command has not been cancelled; what it means is that since the truth has been proved through logical arguments, its non-acceptance can only be due to enmity and obstinacy,

and as such, everybody is responsible for his own deeds . (Qurṭubī)

The eight command لَاحُجَّةَ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمْ (there is no argumentations between us and you -) is that since the disbelievers do not accept the truth, despite its having been proved, which demonstrates their enmity, therefore, further discussion is useless and now there would be no more arguments between the Holy Prophet ﷺ and the disbelievers.

The ninth sentence اَللّٰهُ يَجْمَعُ بَيْنَنَا (Allah will bring us together -) states that on the Day of Judgment, Allah Almighty would gather all of us together and would requite every deed.

The tenth declaration وَاِلَيْهِ الْمَصِيْرُ (and to Him is the final return -) is that all of us would return to Him.

Verses 16 – 18

وَالَّذِيْنَ يُحَآجُّوْنَ فِى اللّٰهِ مِنْۢ بَعْدِمَا اسْتُجِيْبَ لَهٗ حُجَّتُهُمْ دَاحِضَةٌ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَعَلَيْهِمْ غَضَبٌ وَّلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ شَدِيْدٌ ﴿١٦﴾ اَللّٰهُ الَّذِىْٓ اَنْزَلَ الْكِتٰبَ بِالْحَقِّ وَالْمِيْزَانَ ؕ وَمَا يُدْرِيْكَ لَعَلَّ السَّاعَةَ قَرِيْبٌ ﴿١٧﴾ يَسْتَعْجِلُ بِهَا الَّذِيْنَ لَا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِهَا ۚ وَالَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا مُشْفِقُوْنَ مِنْهَا ۙ وَيَعْلَمُوْنَ اَنَّهَا الْحَقُّ ؕ اَلَآ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ يُمَارُوْنَ فِى السَّاعَةِ لَفِىْ ضَلٰلٍۢ بَعِيْدٍ ﴿١٨﴾

And those who argue about Allah after He has been responded to[1], their argument is void in the sight of their Lord, and upon them is wrath, and for them is a severe punishment. [16] **Allah is the One who has sent down the Book with truth, and the Balance as well. And what can let you know? May be, the Hour is near.** [17] **Those who do not believe in it demand for its coming soon, and those who believe are fearful of it, and know it to be a truth. Be aware that those who dispute concerning the Hour are wandering afar from the right path.** [18]

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[1]. i.e. after many people responded to the call of His prophets by accepting Islam.

Commentary

In the previous verses, all the people of the whole world had been invited towards the original *'dīn'* (religion) common between all the revealed Books and between all the prophets عليهم السلام, and were advised to be faithful to it and be steadfast in it. But some infidels, who had no intention of listening and accepting, started arguing with the Muslims, even at this invitation. Some narrations have it that some people of the Book, the Jews and the Christians, put forward the argument that our prophet came before yours and our Book was given before yours, hence our religion is superior to yours. And some narrations have it that this very argument was put forward by the infidels of Quraysh, because they called themselves followers of the religion of Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام.

The Noble Qur'ān has warned these people that the explanations and proofs in favour of Islam and Qur'ān have been fully provided to you, and your own sensible and fair minded people, having accepted them, have embraced Islam, and now their argumentation is nothing but falsehood and misguidance. If they do not accept it, then divine punishment will visit them. This warning is followed by the statement that the Qur'ān is from Allah and contains comprehensive commandments regarding Allah's rights and the rights of the human beings between one another. This fact is stated in the next sentence, أَنْزَلَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ وَالْمِيزَانَ "has sent down the Book with truth and the Balance as well - 17." Here 'the Book' means the Qur'ān, and all the previous revealed Books, and 'truth' means the divine religion mentioned above, and 'the Balance' literally means a weighing balance. Since it is an instrument of weighing one's due and establishing justice, Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه has taken it to mean 'equity' and 'justice'. Mujāhid رحمه الله a leading exegete, has said that here the 'Balance' means full payment of everyone's rights and doing justice. As such the word 'truth' points towards Allah's rights over His servants, and the word مِيزَان *mīzān* (Balance) points towards the rights of human beings over one another.

The statement that those who believe are fearful of the Doomsday means the fear generated due to cognizance of the awesome horrifying happenings which will take place on the Doomsday, and also due to cognizance of one's own short comings and wrong-doings. However, sometimes a believer's eagerness to meet his Lord Allah Almighty overcomes that fear, which does not contradict this statement; some dead

ones are proved to have said in their graves that they wish Doomsday would come soon because the glad tidings given by angels that they would be forgiven and treated kindly, had overcome the fear of Doomsday.

Verses 19 – 20

اَللّٰهُ لَطِيْفٌ ۢبِعِبَادِهٖ يَرْزُقُ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ ۚ وَهُوَالْقَوِىُّ الْعَزِيْزُ ﴿١٩﴾ مَنْ
كَانَ يُرِيْدُ حَرْثَ الْاٰخِرَةِ نَزِدْ لَهٗ فِىْ حَرْثِهٖ ۚ وَمَنْ كَانَ يُرِيْدُ حَرْثَ
الدُّنْيَا نُؤْتِهٖ مِنْهَا ۙ وَمَا لَهٗ فِى الْاٰخِرَةِ مِنْ نَّصِيْبٍ ﴿٢٠﴾

Allah is kind to His slaves. He gives provision to whom He wills. And He is the Strong, the Mighty. [19] **Whoever intends (to have) the harvest of the Hereafter, We will increase in his harvest; and whoever intends (to have) the harvest of the world (only), We will give him thereof, while in the Hereafter there is no share for him.** [20]

Commentary

اَللّٰهُ لَطِيْفٌ بِعِبَادِهٖ (Allah is kind to His slaves - 42:19). The word, *laṭīf* used in the text has more than one lexical meanings. Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ has translated it here as kind, and Sayyidnā 'Ikrimah ؓ has translated it as benefactor.

Muqātil ؓ has said that Allah Almighty is kind to all His servants, so much so that even the infidels and sinners keep on being showered with His worldly blessings. There are many types and kinds of the divine bounties, graces and favours showered upon His servants. That is why many meanings of the word *laṭīf* have been stated in the Tafsīr of Qurṭubī, all of which are covered by the words 'kind' and 'benefactor'.

Although Allah Ta'ālā provides sustenance to all His creatures without any exception – even to those animals on land and in waters whom nobody knows, yet the present verse states that He provides sustenance 'to whom He wills'. This is better understood from the explanation given in Tafsīr Maẓharī which says that there are countless types and kinds of sustenance provided by Allah Ta'ālā; sustenance as necessary is provided to all and sundry, whereas some special kinds of

sustenance are distributed by Him in degrees and quantities determined by His perfect wisdom. Somebody is given more of wealth and goods, somebody is given more of health and strength, somebody is given more of learning and knowledge and somebody is given more of other types and kinds; in this way everybody is dependent on another person and it is this dependence which persuades people to co-operate with and help each other and which is the foundation of human civilization.

Ja'far Ibn Muḥammad رحمہ اللہ تعالیٰ has said that Allah Ta'ālā's kindness to His servants in the matter of sustenance is in two ways. Firstly, He provides food and other necessities to every living being as per his needs, and secondly, He does not provide sustenance for anyone for the whole of his life all at once, rather gives him gradually according to his need, otherwise its preservation would not have been feasible. (Maẓharī, Qurṭubī)

Note

Shāh 'Abdul Ghanī Phūlpūrī رحمہ اللہ تعالیٰ relates from Ḥāji Imdādullah رحمہ اللہ تعالیٰ that anyone who recites the above verse i.e. اَللّٰهُ لَطِيْفٌ ۢبِعِبَادِهٖ يَرْزُقُ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ ۚ وَهُوَ الْقَوِىُّ الْعَزِيْزُ seventy times every morning regularly, would be preserved from shortage of sustenance and said that experience has shown it to be very effective.

Verses 21 – 23

اَمْ لَهُمْ شُرَكٰٓؤُا شَرَعُوْا لَهُمْ مِّنَ الدِّيْنِ مَالَمْ يَاْذَنْۢ بِهِ اللّٰهُ ۗ وَلَوْلَا
كَلِمَةُ الْفَصْلِ لَقُضِىَ بَيْنَهُمْ ۗ وَاِنَّ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ اَلِيْمٌ ﴿٢١﴾
تَرَى الظّٰلِمِيْنَ مُشْفِقِيْنَ مِمَّا كَسَبُوْا وَهُوَ وَاقِعٌۢ بِهِمْ ۗ وَالَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا
وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ فِىْ رَوْضٰتِ الْجَنّٰتِ ۚ لَهُمْ مَّا يَشَآءُوْنَ عِنْدَ
رَبِّهِمْ ۗ ذٰلِكَ هُوَ الْفَضْلُ الْكَبِيْرُ ﴿٢٢﴾ ذٰلِكَ الَّذِىْ يُبَشِّرُ اللّٰهُ عِبَادَهُ
الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ ۗ قُلْ لَّآ اَسْئَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ اَجْرًا اِلَّا
الْمَوَدَّةَ فِى الْقُرْبٰى ۗ وَمَنْ يَّقْتَرِفْ حَسَنَةً نَّزِدْ لَهٗ فِيْهَا حُسْنًا ۗ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ
غَفُوْرٌ شَكُوْرٌ ﴿٢٣﴾

Is it that they have associate-gods who have prescribed for them a religion that is not sanctioned by Allah? And, had it not been for a decisive word, the matter would have been decided between them (here in this world). And of course, for the wrongdoer there is a painful punishment (in the Hereafter). [21] **You will see the wrongdoers fearful of what they earned, and (the punishment) it (entails) is sure to befall them. As for those who believed and did righteous deeds, they will be in meadows of the Gardens. For them there is, with their Lord, whatever they wish. That is the great bounty.** [22] **That is the good news that Allah gives to His slaves who believed and did righteous deeds. Say, "I do not ask you any fee for it, except the love of kinship." And whoever performs a good act, for him We will increase goodness therein. Surely Allah is Most-Forgiving, Very Appreciative.** [23]

Commentary

قُلْ لَّآ اَسْئَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ اَجْرًا اِلاَّ الْمَوَدَّةَ فِى الْقُرْبٰى (Say, "I do not ask you any fee for it, except the love of kinship - 42:23). The explanation of this verse that has been adopted by most of the exegetes is that the Holy Prophet ﷺ has been directed to say the following to the infidels of Quraish, "My real right over all of you is that I am the Messenger of Allah, and you should admit it and obey me for your reformation and betterment; but even if you do not accept my prophethood and messengership, there is still one more right I have over you which you cannot deny; and that is the right of relationship which I have with most of your tribes. You also do not deny the right of relatives and the need of behaving kindly towards them. Therefore, I am not asking you for any compensation for my preaching; all I want is that you should consider my right of being you relative, and refrain from animosity and hostility, irrespective of whether you accept what I am saying or you do not."

Now it is obvious that consideration of the rights of kinship was their own obligation, and could not be taken as compensation for preaching services. Hence the use of the word 'except' in this verse is in its idiomatic sense meaning that although, in reality, it is no compensation, and if you consider it to be so, it is your own mistake. In fact, I do not charge any fee at all. However, I ask you to refrain from the hostile behavior, and to fulfill the rights of kinship which you should do any way.

This explanation of this verse is reported from Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ in the Ṣaḥīḥ of Bukhārī and Ṣaḥīḥ of Muslim; Mujāhid, Qatādah and a very large group of leading exegetes have also adopted this explanation. All prophets ﷺ in every age have openly told their people that they never asked any compensation or payment in lieu of the efforts that they were making for their betterment and well-being; Their compensation would be given by Allah Almighty only. This being so, how could the chief of all the prophets ﷺ, who is the most honoured and exalted of all of them, ask for compensation from his people.

Sa'īd Ibn Manṣūr, Ibn Sa'd, 'Abd Ibn Ḥumaid, Ḥākim and Baihaqī have related an incident of Imām Sha'bī, which has been certified by Ḥākim to be correct, that Imām Sha'bī was questioned by people regarding the explanation of this verse, and thereupon he wrote to Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ for the correct explanation. The reply he got was the same as explained above. Those interested may consult Tafsīr Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī for the full text of the reply given by Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ. Some words of his reply are added in the report of Ibn Jarīr which may be found in the same book.

There is, however, another narration reported with a weak chain of reporters, according to which Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ says that when this verse was revealed, people asked the Holy Prophet ﷺ as to who are his kinsfolk, and he replied that Sayyidnā 'Alī ﷺ, Sayyidah Fāṭimah رضی اللہ عنہا and their offspring's. The authenticity of this narration has been considered weak by Suyūṭī in Ad-Dur-ul-Manthūr and by Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar in Takhrīj of the Aḥādīth of Kashshāf. According to this narration, the meaning would be that the only compensation the Holy Prophet ﷺ asks from the ummah for his services is that they should take care of his progeny. Obviously, this proposition does not befit the high stature of prophets ﷺ, and specially that of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Therefore the correct and preferred explanation which is generally favoured by the ummah is the one given above. But the Shi'ites have not only adopted this doubtful narration, but have also made up a huge stock of baseless presumptions on its basis.

Respect and Love for the Holy Prophet's ﷺ family and progeny

The explanation given above is to clarify that the Holy Prophet ﷺ did not ask his people to respect and love his progeny in exchange of his

services. But it does not mean that the respect and love for the Holy Prophet's ﷺ progeny has no importance. Only an ill-fated, misguided person can think of such a thing. The fact is that one's being a Muslim depends on having reverence and love for the Holy Prophet ﷺ much more than any other person in the whole universe. Naturally, the logical consequence of this reverence and love is to have reverence and love for his close relatives according to the degree of their closeness to the Holy Prophet ﷺ which is obligatory for every Muslim. Since one's children are the closest relations, hence the reverence and love for the children of the Holy Prophet ﷺ is undoubtedly a necessary element of faith. But it does not mean that one should ignore or forget the pure wives رضی اللہ عنہن اجمعین or other noble Companions ﷺ who had manifold associations, closeness and relationships with the Holy Prophet ﷺ.

The gist is that love for the progeny and for the family members of the Holy Prophet ﷺ has never been a matter of controversy in the ummah. it has been taken by the entire ummah unanimously as an essential requirement of faith. Controversies arise when the reverence of others is attacked, otherwise reverence and love for even common descendents of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, known as *sādat*, no matter how distantly related to him, is an honour for a Muslim and is a source of reward in the Hereafter. Since many people started neglecting it, Imām Shāfi'ī رحمہ اللہ تعالیٰ denounced this attitude in a few couplets reproduced below:

یاراکبًا قف بالمحصّب من منًی واهتف بساكن خيفها والناهض
سحرًا اِذا فاضَ الحَجيج الٰى منًی فيضًا كملتطم الفرات الفائض
إن كان رفضًا حُبُّ اٰلِ محمَّدٍ فليشهد الثقلان انّی رافضی

"O rider! Halt near the valley of Muḥaṣṣab in Minā, and when the sea of Ḥajj pilgrims advances in quick waves towards Minā in the morning, announce to every passer-by and inhabitant of the area that if only the love of the progeny of the Holy Prophet ﷺ is *rifḍ* (extreme Shi'ism), then I ask all the jins and humans of this universe to witness that I am also a *rāfiḍī* (staunch Shī'ah)"

This statement of Imām Shāfi'ī, in fact, is the standpoint of the whole ummah.

Verses 24 – 26

اَمْ يَقُوْلُوْنَ افْتَرٰى عَلَى اللّٰهِ كَذِبًا ۚ فَاِنْ يَّشَاِ اللّٰهُ يَخْتِمْ عَلٰى قَلْبِكَ ؕ
وَيَمْحُ اللّٰهُ الْبَاطِلَ وَيُحِقُّ الْحَقَّ بِكَلِمٰتِهٖ ؕ اِنَّهٗ عَلِيْمٌۢ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُوْرِ
﴿۲۴﴾ وَهُوَ الَّذِيْ يَقْبَلُ التَّوْبَةَ عَنْ عِبَادِهٖ وَيَعْفُوْا عَنِ السَّيِّاٰتِ
وَيَعْلَمُ مَا تَفْعَلُوْنَ ﴿۲۵﴾ وَيَسْتَجِيْبُ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ
وَيَزِيْدُهُمْ مِّنْ فَضْلِهٖ ؕ وَالْكٰفِرُوْنَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ شَدِيْدٌ ﴿۲۶﴾

Is it that they say, "He has forged a lie against Allah"? So, if Allah wills, He may put a seal on your heart.[1] And Allah blots out falsehood and establishes truth with His words. Surely, He is fully aware of what lies in the hearts. [24] **And He is the One who accepts repentance from His slaves, and forgives evil deeds, and knows whatever you do.** [25] **And He responds to (the prayer of) those who believe and do righteous deeds, and gives them more out of His grace. As for the disbelievers, for them there is a severe punishment.** [26]

Commentary

The first verse conveys Allah Almighty's reply to those who held the prophethood and messengership of the Holy Prophet ﷺ to be false, the Qur'ān to be wrong and forged. The the reply is based on a divine rule that miracles or events occurring against normal course which cannot be performed by ordinary human beings are created and shown through prophets, by Allah Almighty's Grace, to prove their prophethood, without any discretion of the prophets themselves.

Although some magicians also do perform such magical tricks, but obviously neither the prophets nor the magicians can perform any of these things without Allah Almighty's intent and scheme. He allows the magicians to perform their tricks as a measure of test and trial. However,

1. It means that the miraculous Qur'ān recited by the unlettered Prophet ﷺ is in itself a clear proof of its being revealed by Allah Ta'ālā. Allah's practice is such that if a person falsely claims to be a prophet, He does not let him show any miracle. Therefore, had there been, God forbid, something forged by the Holy Prophet ﷺ in the Qur'ān, Allah would have put a seal on his heart, and he would have never been able to come up with such a miraculous discourse.

to differentiate between magic and miracle and between a magician and a prophet, the rule devised by Him is that no false claimant of prophethood can perform any magical trick successfully; magical tricks can be performed successfully by one until he claims prophethood, but the magic vanishes as soon as one lays a false claim of prophethood.

When Allah Ta'ālā bestows prophethood and messengership on anyone, He also favours him with miracles and makes those miracles highly visible. Thus He provides physical and decreed proof of his prophethood. And He also confirms him in His Divine Book.

In view of this rule, it should be understood that the Noble Qur'ān is such a miracle that all the humans and all the jins of this world are unable to produce even one verse comparable to the verse of the Qur'ān. Their inability to do so was proved in the days of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and continues till today. Such an open and obvious miracle cannot be accomplished by a false claimant of prophethood. The Holy Prophet's claim to '*waḥy*' and messengership is, therefore, correct and true, and those who hold it to be incorrect and forged are misguided calumniators.

The deniers and opponents have been advised in the second verse that there is still time to give up and renounce their disbelief and '*kufr*'. Allah is very merciful and Most Beneficent; He accepts the repentance of those who truly repent, and forgives their sins.

The Reality of '*Taubah*' (Repentence)

The literal meaning of '*taubah*' is to return and turn to; in religious terminology, giving up and renunciation of any sin is called '*taubah*'. There are three conditions for its being proper and genuine.

One is to give up, immediately, the sin one is involved in. The second is to repent for the past sin, and the third is to determine firmly not to commit it in future. If it pertains to neglect of any obligatory duty (*farḍ*), one has to start observing it or start offering '*qaḍā*''(prescribed compensation). If it relates to the rights of another person and if that right is monetary or material and the concerned person is alive, then the material or money has to be returned to him, unless he agrees to forgo, and if that person is not alive, but his heirs are available, then the material or money has to be returned to the heirs; if the heirs are also not available, then the material or money has to be deposited in the Islamic

public treasury (*bait-ul-māl*) – if there is no public treasury, or it is not managed properly, then the material or money has to be given as alms on his behalf. If the right owed to another person is not monetary or material, for example, if another person has been distressed unduly, or he has been abused or his backbiting has been committed, then he has to be pleased and forgiveness has to be sought and obtained from him or her.

It is important to note that for all kinds of 'taubah', giving up of sin must be for the sake of Allah, and not due to any physical inability or weakness. The 'Sharī'ah' demands that one ought to renounce all the sins, but if someone renounces only a particular sin, Ahl-us-Sunnah hold that that particular sin would be forgiven, whereas his liability for other sins would continue.

Verses 27 – 35

وَلَوْ بَسَطَ اللّٰهُ الرِّزْقَ لِعِبَادِهٖ لَبَغَوْا فِى الْاَرْضِ وَلٰكِنْ يُّنَزِّلُ بِقَدَرٍ
مَّا يَشَآءُ ؕ اِنَّهٗ بِعِبَادِهٖ خَبِيْرٌۢ بَصِيْرٌ ﴿٢٧﴾ وَهُوَ الَّذِىْ يُنَزِّلُ الْغَيْثَ مِنْۢ
بَعْدِ مَا قَنَطُوْا وَيَنْشُرُ رَحْمَتَهٗ ؕ وَهُوَ الْوَلِىُّ الْحَمِيْدُ ﴿٢٨﴾ وَمِنْ اٰيٰتِهٖ
خَلْقُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ وَمَا بَثَّ فِيْهِمَا مِنْ دَآبَّةٍ ؕ وَهُوَ عَلٰى
جَمْعِهِمْ اِذَا يَشَآءُ قَدِيْرٌ ﴿٢٩﴾ وَمَآ اَصَابَكُمْ مِّنْ مُّصِيْبَةٍ فَبِمَا كَسَبَتْ
اَيْدِيْكُمْ وَيَعْفُوْا عَنْ كَثِيْرٍ ﴿٣٠﴾ وَمَآ اَنْتُمْ بِمُعْجِزِيْنَ فِى الْاَرْضِ ۚۖ
وَمَا لَكُمْ مِّنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ مِنْ وَّلِىٍّ وَّلَا نَصِيْرٍ ﴿٣١﴾ وَمِنْ اٰيٰتِهِ الْجَوَارِ
فِى الْبَحْرِ كَالْاَعْلَامِ ﴿٣٢﴾ اِنْ يَّشَاْ يُسْكِنِ الرِّيْحَ فَيَظْلَلْنَ رَوَاكِدَ
عَلٰى ظَهْرِهٖ ؕ اِنَّ فِىْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيٰتٍ لِّكُلِّ صَبَّارٍ شَكُوْرٍ ﴿٣٣﴾ اَوْ يُوْبِقْهُنَّ
بِمَا كَسَبُوْا وَيَعْفُ عَنْ كَثِيْرٍ ﴿٣٤﴾ وَّيَعْلَمَ الَّذِيْنَ يُجَادِلُوْنَ فِىْٓ
اٰيٰتِنَا ؕ مَا لَهُمْ مِّنْ مَّحِيْصٍ ﴿٣٥﴾

And should Allah expand the provision for His slaves (to its full extent), they would spread mischief on earth; but He sends down what He wills in (due) measure.

Surely, with regard to His slaves, He is All-Aware, Ever-Watchful. [27] **And He is the One who sends down rain after they have lost hope, and He extends His mercy. And He is the Guardian, Worthy of all praise.** [28] **And among His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth and of the creatures He has spread in them. And He is Powerful to assemble them whenever He so wills.** [29] **And whatever hardship befalls you is because of what your own hands have committed, while He overlooks many (of your faults).** [30] **And you are not able to frustrate (Him) in the earth. And, besides Allah, you have neither someone to protect, nor someone to help.** [31] **And among His signs are ships in the sea, like mountains.** [32] **If He wills, He may stop the wind, so they will stand still on its back. Surely in this, there are signs for everyone who is ever patient, fully grateful.** [33] **Or He may destroy them because of what they earned, and may overlook many,** [34] **and (in such an event) those who raise disputes in Our verses will come to know that there is no way for them to escape.** [35]

Commentary

Sequence and background of Revelation

In these verses, Allah Almighty has given the proof of His Oneness by pointing out to the perfection of His Wisdom through which He has tied up the whole universe with a stable system, which is surely being supervised by a Being who is All-Wise and All-Aware.

Allah Almighty has opened this subject by pointing towards the economic system which He, in His Wisdom, has established in this world. This subject bears a relationship with the previous verses wherein it had been stated that Allah Almighty accepts the worships of the believers which includes acceptance of their supplications as well. Here one could get perplexed by the frequent observation that a Muslim supplicates for some worldly need, but his objective is not met; this doubt has been removed in the first of the above verses. The gist of the clarification is that sometimes fulfillment of one's all desires is neither in his own interest nor in the interest of his society. As such, if any supplication of anyone at any time has apparently not been accepted, it would be for the sake of greater well-being of the universe which nobody knows, except the All-knowing, All-wise Creator. If every human being of this world is given every kind

of sustenance and every kind of blessings, this system of the world just cannot be managed wisely. (Tafsīr Kabīr)

Some narrations also corroborate that this verse was revealed about those Muslims who used to wish that they also should get the same wealth and opulence as was available to the infidels. Imām Baghawī رحمه الله تعالى has reproduced the statement of Sayyidnā Khabbāb Ibn 'Aratt ﷺ that when they saw the wealth and opulence of Banū Quraiẓah, Banū Naḍīr and Banū Qainuqā' (the Jewish tribes), the desire to have such affluence welled up in their hearts also, and thereafter this verse was revealed. And Sayyidnā 'Amr Ibn Ḥārith ﷺ states that some of the companions of Ṣuffah had expressed their desire to the Holy Prophet ﷺ that Allah Almighty may make them wealthy and this verse was revealed thereafter. (Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī, etc.)

General Abundance of Wealth in the World is cause of Tumult

However, this verse states that had every kind of sustenance and every kind of blessing been provided abundantly to every individual of this world, the discord and dispute between one another would have crossed all limits, because due to abundance of wealth, nobody would be in need of another person, nor would one be subdued by another. On the other hand, one attribute of wealth is that greed and inordinate desire also increase with the increase in wealth. It would necessarily have resulted in the common use of force to get possession of another person's property, hence disputes and fights, rebellion and other misdeeds would have crossed all limits. That is why Allah Ta'ālā, instead of providing everybody with every kind of sustenance and every kind of blessing, has distributed his blessings in such a way that somebody has abundance of riches and wealth, another person is healthier and stronger than others, yet another person is more comely and beautiful than others, and yet another has surpassed others in knowledge and wisdom. In short, everybody is dependent on others for one thing or another, and it is this inter-dependence which is the foundation of civilization.

This is the meaning of وَلٰكِنْ يُّنَزِّلُ بِقَدَرٍ مَّا يَشَآءُ (but He sends down what He wills in (due) measure - 42:27) It means that Allah has bestowed His blessings upon the people of this world in a special way. And by stating further on اِنَّهٗ بِعِبَادِهٖ خَبِيْرٌۢ بَصِيْرٌ (Surely, with regard to His slaves, He is All-Aware, Ever-watchful - 42:27) it has been indicated that Allah

Almighty knows very well what is good for a person and what is harmful. Accordingly, He has provided everybody with what is good for him, and if He has deprived somebody of anything, it is because of his and the whole world's welfare. It is not at all necessary that we should understand the underlying wisdom and welfare behind the decision about every individual, because everyone thinks on the basis of his limited knowledge, whereas Allah Almighty is looking at the whole world. Therefore it is simply not possible to gauge all of His Wisdom. A perceivable parallel would be the case of an honest head of state who has passed certain orders which happen to affect some people adversely, and these people naturally face problems. Now a person who has been so affected adversely is quite likely to feel bad about those orders of the head of the state, because his thinking is limited to his own interest. But a person who is looking at the circumstances of the whole state and the whole nation and who appreciates that the whole state cannot be sacrificed for the sake of one individual's interest, does not consider such a step to be bad. Then how is it possible to gauge the Wisdom of the Being who is managing the system of the whole universe? If this point is kept in mind, the confusion and perplexity generated by the sight of anyone surrounded by tribulation would disappear by itself.

This verse also tells us that distribution of wealth and goods equally to all the people of the world is neither possible, nor desirable nor is it required for the existence of the system of the universe. This issue will be discussed in detail in explanation of the verse نَحْنُ قَسَمْنَا بَيْنَهُمْ مَّعِيْشَتَهُمْ (43:32) of surah Zukhruf.

The Difference between Paradise and the World

Here a question may arise that all kinds of blessings will be provided in abundance to all human beings in Paradise, so why would it not cause mischief there? And the answer is that the cause of mischief in this world is the abundance of wealth and goods coupled with greed and inordinate desire to have more and more which keeps on increasing with wealth. But greed and inordinate desire would simply not be there in Paradise, although blessings and delights will keep on being showered. And that is why this mischief would not surface there.

The question why could not greed and inordinate desire be removed and wealth and goods be provided in abundance in this world as well, is

quite irrelevant. The very purpose of creating this world is to have co-existence of good and evil. It is simply not possible without it to arrange trial of human beings which is the real purpose of creation of the universe. Therefore, the real purpose of creating this universe would have failed, if greed and desire had been removed altogether from human beings. Paradise, on the other hand, would comprise goodness only, therefore, such base emotions will simply not be there.

هُوَ الَّذِی یُنَزِّلُ الْغَیْثَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا قَنَطُوا (And He is the One who sends down rain after they have lost hope - 42:28)". It is usual for Allah Almighty to send down rain whenever the earth is in severe need of water. But by saying "after they have lost hope", attention is being drawn towards the fact that sometimes Allah Almighty, in deviation from His usual norm, delays sending down rain so much that people begin losing hope. Apart from trial, such a happening is to warn that rain and famine are all in the power of Allah Ta'ālā; whenever He wants, He stops rain because of people's misdeeds, etc., so that people turn their attention towards His kindness, and display their humility and dependence. If rains had been subject to a strict time-table without any deviation, people would have considered rains to be purely subject to apparent causes, and would have become inattentive to Allah's Almighty's power. Here losing hope means losing hope in their contrivances because disappointment with Allah's kindness is *kufr* (infidelity).

وَمَا بَثَّ فِیهِمَا مِنْ دَآبَّةٍ (and the creatures He has spread in them - 29). The original lexical meaning of دَابَّة *'dābbah'* (used in the text and translated as 'creatures') is anything which moves about of its own will; later on this word began to be used for animals. This verse states that Allah Almighty has created many creatures which move about on the earth as well as in the sky. The creatures which move about on the earth are all too visible; the ones which move about in the sky could well be the angels as well, and it is quite possible that there may be some animals in the sky so far unknown to man.

Briefly, in view of the system of the universe, Allah Almighty has not provided every one with wealth and goods in abundance, rather He has distributed them in accordance with the dictates of wisdom. But the good things of universe which are of general benefit have been provided to everyone. Rain, clouds, earth, sky and the creatures therein have all been

created for the benefit of human beings, and they all demonstrate the Oneness of Allah. If after all this, anyone suffers any hardship, he should consider it to be due to his own deeds, and he should do a little heart searching, instead of complaining against Allah Ta'ālā.

وَمَآ اَصَابَكُمْ مِّنْ مُّصِيْبَةٍ فَبِمَا كَسَبَتْ اَيْدِيْكُمْ وَيَعْفُوْا عَنْ كَثِيْرٍ (And whatever hardship befalls you is because of what your own hands have committed, while He overlooks many [of your faults].... 42:30) means exactly the same. Sayyidnā Ḥasan ﷺ has narrated that when this verse was revealed, the Holy Prophet ﷺ said "I swear by the Being Who holds my life, that anyone who gets scratched by a piece of wood, or his nerve shivers or his step falters is all due to his sins, and Allah Ta'ālā does not punish for every sin, rather the number of sins He overlooks far exceeds those for which any punishment is given." Maulānā Ashraf Alī Thānavi رحمه الله تعالى has stated that just as the physical hardships and tortures befall due to sins, the inner ailments are also caused by sins. One sin committed by a person becomes the cause for getting involved in other sins. Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Qayyim has written in his book *Ad-Dawā-'ush- Shāfī* that one prompt punishment of a sin is that one gets involved in other sins; similarly the prompt reward of a virtuous deed is that it attracts another virtue. Baiḍāwī and others have stated that this verse is specifically meant for those people who are likely to commit sins. The hardships and the troubles that befall prophets who are innocent of sins, children who have not reached the age of puberty and mad persons, who do not commit any sin, are not covered by this verse. There are other reasons for them, for example, they are upgraded in their rewards. And in reality a man cannot fathom the depths of wisdom behind them. (Allah knows best)

It is proved from some narrations of Ḥadīth, as reproduced by Ḥākim in Mustadrak and by Baghawī on the authority of Sayyidnā 'Alī ﷺ that those sins for which punishment is given in this world are forgiven for Muslims in the Hereafter. (Maẓharī)

Verses 36 – 43

فَمَآ اُوْتِيْتُمْ مِّنْ شَيْءٍ فَمَتَاعُ الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا ۚ وَمَا عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ خَيْرٌ
وَّاَبْقٰى لِلَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَلٰى رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُوْنَ ﴿٣٦﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ يَجْتَنِبُوْنَ

كَبٰٓئِرَ الْاِثْمِ وَالْفَوَاحِشَ وَاِذَا مَا غَضِبُوْا هُمْ يَغْفِرُوْنَ ﴿٣٧﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ
اسْتَجَابُوْا لِرَبِّهِمْ وَاَقَامُوا الصَّلٰوةَ ص وَاَمْرُهُمْ شُوْرٰى بَيْنَهُمْ ص وَمِمَّا
رَزَقْنٰهُمْ يُنْفِقُوْنَ ﴿٣٨﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ اِذَآ اَصَابَهُمُ الْبَغْىُ هُمْ يَنْتَصِرُوْنَ
﴿٣٩﴾ وَجَزٰٓؤُا سَيِّئَةٍ سَيِّئَةٌ مِّثْلُهَا ج فَمَنْ عَفَا وَاَصْلَحَ فَاَجْرُهٗ عَلَى اللّٰهِ ط
اِنَّهٗ لَا يُحِبُّ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿٤٠﴾ وَلَمَنِ انْتَصَرَ بَعْدَ ظُلْمِهٖ فَاُولٰٓئِكَ مَا
عَلَيْهِمْ مِّنْ سَبِيْلٍ ﴿٤١﴾ اِنَّمَا السَّبِيْلُ عَلَى الَّذِيْنَ يَظْلِمُوْنَ النَّاسَ
وَيَبْغُوْنَ فِى الْاَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ ط اُولٰٓئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ اَلِيْمٌ ﴿٤٢﴾
وَلَمَنْ صَبَرَ وَغَفَرَ اِنَّ ذٰلِكَ لَمِنْ عَزْمِ الْاُمُوْرِ ﴿٤٣﴾

So, whatever thing has been given to you is an enjoyment of the worldly life. And that which is with Allah is much better, and much more durable for those who believe and place their trust in Allah, [36] and (for) those who abstain from the major sins and from shameless acts; and (for those who) when they get angry, they forgive, [37] and those who have responded to their Lord (in submission to Him), and have established salah, and whose affairs are (settled) with consultation between them, and who spend out of what We have given to them, [38] and those who, when they are subjected to aggression, defend themselves. [39] And the recompense of evil is evil like it. Then the one who forgives and compromises has his reward undertaken by Allah. Surely, He does not like the unjust. [40]

And the one who defends himself after having been wronged, there is no blame on such people. [41] Blame, in fact, is upon those who wrong people and make mischief on earth unjustly. For such people there is a painful punishment. [42] And if one observes patience and forgives, it is, of course, one of the courageous conducts. [43]

Commentary

The above verses state the imperfection and temporary nature of the blessings of this world, as against the perfection and permanence of the blessings of the Hereafter. The most important and major condition for

obtaining the heavenly blessings in the Hereafter is faith and belief, without which nobody can get them. However, if in addition to faith, one has taken full care of virtuous deeds as well, then one will get the heavenly blessings right from the beginning, otherwise one would get them after being punished for one's sins and shortcomings. That is why the first condition stated in the above verses is belief referred to by the words, "those who believe". Then those particular deeds have been stated without which, according to the rule, the bounties of the Hereafter will not be obtained from the beginning, but after having been punished for one's sins. The rule is there for application in general, but if Allah Ta'ālā wills, He may forgive all the sins of the greatest of the sinners, and give him the blessings of the Hereafter right from the beginning, He is not subject to any rule or code. Now, let us look at those particular virtues and deeds which have been mentioned with such an importance.

First virtue: عَلٰى رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُوْنَ (and place their trust in Allah - 36,) meaning those who place their trust in Allah, under all circumstances, in all matters; they do not consider anyone else to be the real cause of any thing.

Second virtue: الَّذِيْنَ يَجْتَنِبُوْنَ كَبٰٓئِرَ الْاِثْمِ وَالْفَوَاحِشَ (those who abstain from the major sins and from shameless acts - 37). What are major sins? Details have already been stated in the commentary of Sūrah Nisā'; the author has also given a complete list of major and minor sins in his booklet in Urdu published under the little of "Gunah-e- bay ladhdhat (گناہ بے لذت)".

The wisdom behind specially mentioning shameless acts, apart from all the other major sins, is that they are not only graver, but also infectious in that they influence others also. Shameless acts include adultery and the acts that precede it as preludes, and those bad deeds which are committed brazenly in public, because they corrupt the whole society and their liability is also very severe.

Third virtue: وَاِذَا مَا غَضِبُوْا هُمْ يَغْفِرُوْنَ (and when they get angry, they forgive - 37,) This is a moral quality of the highest order, because when love and anger prevail upon someone, they make him blind and deaf, and he loses his ability to distinguish right from wrong, and true from false, rather, he cannot appreciate the results of his own actions.The one who is angry tries his utmost to vent his anger fully upon the one with

whom he is angry. That is why Allah Ta'ālā has defined this quality of Mu'mins and virtuous persons that when they are angry, they not only maintain the limits of right and wrong, but also forgo their justified rights.

Fourth virtue: وَالَّذِيْنَ اسْتَجَابُوْا لِرَبِّهِمْ وَاَقَامُوالصَّلٰوةَ (and those who have responded to their Lord [in submission to Him] and have established Ṣalāh - 38,). 'Responding to the Lord' means to accept Allah's orders immediately, without questioning them, and get ready to obey them, irrespective of whether the order is or is not according to one's liking. This includes carrying out all the obligatory duties and avoiding all the things considered unlawful and undesirable in Islam. But *ṣalāh* being the most important of all the obligations, and having the quality of enabling discharge of other duties and avoidance of unlawful things, has been mentioned prominently.

The fifth virtue: وَاَمْرُهُمْ شُوْرٰى بَيْنَهُمْ (whose affairs are settled with consultation between them - 38). The sense is that in all important affairs where the Shari'ah is silent, they they consult each other. 'Affairs' have been qualified by us with the word 'important', because the word 'Amr' used in the text signifies importance in common usage. It has been clarified in the explanation of the verse (وَشَاوِرْهُمْ فِى الْاَمْرِ And consult them in the matter - 3:159) of sūrah 'Āl-'Imrān that important affairs include affairs of the state as well as important affairs in general. Ibn Kathīr has stated that consultation in the important affairs of the state is compulsory. The selection of the head of the state through consultation, ordained by Islam, brought to an end the autocratic rule of kings of the days of ignorance who used to take the state as an inherited estate. As such, Islam laid the foundation of real democracy by ending autocracy. But Islam, unlike western democracies, has not given total authority to the public. There are certain restrictions on the members of the advisory body. So the system of government in Islam is a very moderate one, quite apart from autocracy and western democracy. Please see details in the second volume of Ma'arifulQur'ān from page 227 to 238.

Imām Jaṣṣāṣ has stated in Aḥkām-ul-Qur'ān that this verse has made the importance of consultation evident, and we are under orders to consult wise and far sighted people for taking action in important matters requiring advice, and not to act hurriedly relying only on ourselves.

Importance of consultation and its process

Khaṭīb Baghdādī has narrated the following statement of Sayyidnā 'Alī ﷺ "I asked the Holy Prophet ﷺ that if, after you we face a situation about which neither the Qur'ān has any specific ruling, nor have you given any direction, how should we proceed?" The Holy Prophet ﷺ replied by saying,

اجمعوا له العابدين من امتى واجعلوه بينكم شورٰى ولا تقضوا برأى واحد

"In such a case, assemble *'ābidīn* (the worshipping people) of my ummah, and decide the matter by mutual consultation; do not take decision on any individual's single opinion." (Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī, referring to Khaṭīb)

In some versions of this narration, the word *'fuqahā'* (jurists) also appears alongwith *'ābidīn* (the worshipping people) which means that the jurists who have understanding of the religion and worshipers are the ones who should be consulted.

The author of Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī has stated that if the above process is not followed in consultation, rather irreligious people and people without proper knowledge of religion are consulted, the ill effects would prevail upon the good in their advice.

Baihaqī رحمه الله تعالیٰ has narrated in Shu'ab-ul-'Īmān from Sayyidnā Ibn Umar ﷺ that the Holy Prophet ﷺ has said, "Anyone who intends to do something, and he takes that action after consultation, Allah Ta'ālā would guide him towards the best possible option." It means that He will turn that person's direction towards an option that results in his betterment. A similar *ḥadīth* reported by Sayyidnā Ḥasan ﷺ has been reproduced by Bukhārī in Al-Adab-ul-Mufrad, and by 'Abd Ibn Ḥumaid in his Musnad that the Holy Prophet ﷺ, after reciting the above verse, said:

ما تشاور قوم قط الا هدُوا لأرشد أمرهم

"When a nation takes an action after mutual consultation, it is surely guided towards the correct course."

As reported in a hadith, the Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "So far as your rulers are the best among you, your rich people are generous (enough to spend in the way of Allah and on poor people) and your affairs are

decided through mutual consultation, then the back of the earth would be better for you than its belly (i.e. the life would be better than death) but when your rulers are the worst from among you, your rich people are misers and your affairs are given in the charge of women, then the belly of the earth will be better for you than its back (i.e. death will be better than life). (Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī)

Sixth virtue:- مِمَّا رَزَقْنٰهُمْ يُنْفِقُوْنَ (who spend out of what We have given to them - 38) It refers to spending for virtuous deeds, such as *zakāh*, obligatory and optional alms. Qur'ān usually mentions *zakāh* and *ṣadaqāt* (alms) immediately after *ṣalāh*. But the mention of mutual consultation immediately after *ṣalāh* and the mention of *Zakāh* after it is perhaps to attract attention to the possibility of utilizing the five times daily *ṣalāh* congregation in mosques for the purpose of consultation also in matters which require mutual consultation. (Ruh-ul-Ma'ani)

Seventh virtue:- وَالَّذِيْنَ اِذَآ اَصَابَهُمُ الْبَغْيُ هُمْ يَنْتَصِرُوْنَ (and those who, when they are subjected to aggression, defend themselves - 39.) The original word used in the text is *'yantaṣirūn'* which may be translated as 'defend themselves' and also as 'retaliate'. In the latter case, retaliation must be equal, and should in no case exceed the limit of equality. This quality, in reality, is a further elaboration of the third virtue, i.e forgiving the opponents. It means that though forgiveness is a good quality, yet one may face certain situations where the mischief gets a fillip if one forgives, and hence it is better to take revenge in those situations. This verse has defined the rule that in those situations where taking revenge is the more suitable option, one has to take care that one does not exceed the equalizing limit, otherwise he will become unjust and transgressor. That is why this verse is followed by the verse 40, وَجَزٰٓؤُا سَيِّئَةٍ سَيِّئَةٌ مِّثْلُهَا (and the recompense of evil is evil like it.) which lays down the equitable rule of retaliation that one may cause just as much physical or monetary harm to his opponent as he has received from him; but the condition is that causing that harm is not a sin in itself. For example, if someone has been forced by another to take an alcoholic drink, it would not be permissible for him to force the other person to take an alcoholic drink.

Although permission has been given in this verse to take revenge in equal measure, but immediately thereafter it is emphasized again that فَمَنْ عَفَا وَاَصْلَحَ فَاَجْرُهٗ عَلَى اللّٰهِ "the one who forgives and compromises has his reward

undertaken by Allah. - 40" The instruction is that to forgive is better. More details are given in the later two verses.

The Moderate decision between forgiveness and revenge

Ibrāhīm Nakha'ī رحمہ اللہ تعالیٰ has stated that former virtuous elders did not like that Muslims are disgraced and debased by the sinners and oppressors who, if not taken to task, may be encouraged to their further wrongdoings. Therefore, where it is apprehended that the sinners and oppressors would become more daring and would harass the decent people if they are forgiven, then it is better to take revenge from them. And to forgive would be better in case the transgressor is repentant, and there is no apprehension of his becoming more daring. Qāḍī Abū Bakr Ibn-ul-'Arabī in Aḥkām-ul-Qur'ān and Qurṭubī in his Tafsīr have concurred to the view that forgivness and revenge are applicable as suitable, in different situations,. For one who is repentant after having transgressed, it is better to forgive and for one who is stubborn and insistent upon transgression, it is better to take revenge.

Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thanawi رحمہ اللہ تعالیٰ has, however, explained the issue in Bayān-ul-Qur'ān from a little different angle. He says that Allah Ta'ālā has mentioned two qualities particular to the true, sincere and virtuous Muslims in both the verses. The verse emphasizing on forgiveness tells us that they are not overcome by anger, rather kindness and generosity remains dominant in their temperament because of which they forgive the ones who commit excess against them. And in the verse that refers to revenge, we are told that it is a particular quality of these virtuous people that if at any time their heart is inclined to take revenge of an injustice and they do so, they do not exceed the equitable limit, although to forgive is always better for them.

Verses 44 – 50

وَمَنْ يُّضْلِلِ اللّٰهُ فَمَا لَهٗ مِنْ وَّلِيٍّ مِّنْۢ بَعْدِهٖ ۭ وَتَرَى الظّٰلِمِيْنَ لَمَّا رَاَوُا

الْعَذَابَ يَقُوْلُوْنَ هَلْ اِلٰى مَرَدٍّ مِّنْ سَبِيْلٍ ﴿٤٤﴾ وَتَرٰىهُمْ يُعْرَضُوْنَ

عَلَيْهَا خٰشِعِيْنَ مِنَ الذُّلِّ يَنْظُرُوْنَ مِنْ طَرْفٍ خَفِيٍّ ۭ وَقَالَ الَّذِيْنَ

اٰمَنُوْٓا اِنَّ الْخٰسِرِيْنَ الَّذِيْنَ خَسِرُوْٓا اَنْفُسَهُمْ وَاَهْلِيْهِمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ ۭ

اَلَآ اِنَّ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ فِيْ عَذَابٍ مُّقِيْمٍ ﴿٤٥﴾ وَمَا كَانَ لَهُمْ مِّنْ اَوْلِيَآءَ
يَنْصُرُوْنَهُمْ مِّنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ ؕ وَمَنْ يُّضْلِلِ اللّٰهُ فَمَا لَهٗ مِنْ سَبِيْلٍ ﴿٤٦﴾ ؕ
اِسْتَجِيْبُوْا لِرَبِّكُمْ مِّنْ قَبْلِ اَنْ يَّاْتِيَ يَوْمٌ لَّا مَرَدَّ لَهٗ مِنَ اللّٰهِ ؕ مَا لَكُمْ مِّنْ
مَّلْجَاٍ يَّوْمَئِذٍ وَّمَا لَكُمْ مِّنْ نَّكِيْرٍ ﴿٤٧﴾ فَاِنْ اَعْرَضُوْا فَمَآ اَرْسَلْنٰكَ
عَلَيْهِمْ حَفِيْظًا ؕ اِنْ عَلَيْكَ اِلَّا الْبَلٰغُ ؕ وَاِنَّآ اِذَآ اَذَقْنَا الْاِنْسَانَ مِنَّا
رَحْمَةً فَرِحَ بِهَا ۚ وَاِنْ تُصِبْهُمْ سَيِّئَةٌ ۢ بِمَا قَدَّمَتْ اَيْدِيْهِمْ فَاِنَّ الْاِنْسَانَ
كَفُوْرٌ ﴿٤٨﴾ لِلّٰهِ مُلْكُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ ؕ يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَآءُ ؕ يَهَبُ
لِمَنْ يَّشَآءُ اِنَاثًا وَّيَهَبُ لِمَنْ يَّشَآءُ الذُّكُوْرَ ﴿٤٩﴾ اَوْ يُزَوِّجُهُمْ ذُكْرَانًا
وَّاِنَاثًا ۚ وَيَجْعَلُ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ عَقِيْمًا ؕ اِنَّهٗ عَلِيْمٌ قَدِيْرٌ ﴿٥٠﴾

And the one whom Allah lets go astray, there is no one for him to protect thereafter. And you will see the wrongdoers, when they will see the punishment, that they will say, "Is there any way to be sent back (to the world)? " [44] And you will see them being presented to it (the Fire), downcast because of humiliation, looking with stealthy glance. And those who believe will say, "The real losers are those who have lost their own selves and their families on the Day of Judgment." Be aware that the wrongdoers are in lasting punishment. [45] And for them there will not be any friends who may help them besides Allah. And the one whom Allah lets go astray, for him there is no way (to save himself). [46] Respond to your Lord before there comes a day for which there will be no reversal from Allah's side. For you there will be neither a refuge that day, nor an opportunity to question (Allah about your fate). [47] So, if they turn away, then We did not send you as a supervisor over them. You are not responsible but for conveying the message. And when We make man taste mercy from Us, he rejoices with it, and if an evil befalls him because of what their hands sent ahead, then man becomes ungrateful. [48] To Allah belongs the kingdom of the heavens and the earth. He creates what He wills. He grants females to whom He wills, and grants males to whom He wills. [49] Or He combines for them

couples, both males and females, and makes whom He wills barren. Surely, He is All-Knowing, Very-Powerful. [50]

Commentary

The earlier three of the above verses state the end of those people who, as against the virtuous Muslims, remained desirous of the delights and luxuries of this world, instead of caring about the Hereafter. Then in verse 47, they have been advised to repent and embrace faith before the scourge of Doomsday comes upon them. Thereafter, in verse 48, the Holy Prophet ﷺ has been comforted and assured that if these people do not come to their senses, despite your preaching again and again, and despite your tireless efforts, then you should not worry: فَإِنْ أَعْرَضُوا فَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ عَلَيْهِمْ حَفِيظًا "So, if they turn away, then We did not send you as a supervisor over them. You are not responsible but for conveying the message" - 48.

Verses 49 and 50 state the absolute power and perfect wisdom of Allah Ta'ālā in the creation of this universe in which He has no partner, and then mankind has been called to believe in the Oneness of Allah. In this regard, after stating the creation of the earth and the heavens, Allah Almighty has stated a fact about His power in verse 49, يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَاءُ (He creates what He wills.) to indicate that He has absolute Power to create anything small or big. He creates whatever He wills whenever He wills. In this context, creation of mankind has been mentioned by saying, "He grants females to whom He wills, and grants males to whom He wills. Or He combines for them couples, both males and females, and makes whom He wills barren. Surely He is All-Knowing, Very Powerful. (49,50)" It means that nobody's intention or authority has anything to do in the creation of a human being, nor does anybody have its knowledge. What to say of anybody else, even the intention or choice of the parents, who are the apparent agents of the creation of a human beings, does not have any bearing on the child's creation. Let alone having a say in the child's creation, the mother does not even know before the child is born.as to what is being formed in her womb, and how it is being processed.

It is Allah Ta'ālā alone who grants female children to whom He wills, and male children to whom He wills; to some He grants both male and female children, and He renders some females barren who do not have any children.

While stating the sex of children in this verse, Allah Ta'ālā has mentioned females first, and males later. Taking a hint from this verse, Sayyidnā Wāthilah Ibn Asqa' ﷺ has said that blessed is the woman who gives birth to a daughter first. (Qurṭubī)

Verses 51 – 53

وَمَا كَانَ لِبَشَرٍ اَنْ يُّكَلِّمَهُ اللّٰهُ اِلَّا وَحْيًا اَوْمِنْ وَّرَآئِ حِجَابٍ
اَوْيُرْسِلَ رَسُوْلًا فَيُوْحِيَ بِاِذْنِهٖ مَايَشَآءُ ؕ اِنَّهٗ عَلِيٌّ حَكِيْمٌ ﴿٥١﴾
وَكَذٰلِكَ اَوْحَيْنَآ اِلَيْكَ رُوْحًا مِّنْ اَمْرِنَا ؕ مَا كُنْتَ تَدْرِيْ مَا الْكِتٰبُ
وَلَا الْاِيْمَانُ وَلٰكِنْ جَعَلْنٰهُ نُوْرًا نَّهْدِيْ بِهٖ مَنْ نَّشَآءُ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا ؕ
وَاِنَّكَ لَتَهْدِيْٓ اِلٰى صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيْمٍ ﴿٥٢﴾ صِرَاطِ اللّٰهِ الَّذِيْ لَهٗ مَا فِي
السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَا فِي الْاَرْضِ ؕ اَلَآ اِلَى اللّٰهِ تَصِيْرُ الْاُمُوْرُ ﴿٥٣﴾

And it is not (possible) for a human being that Allah speaks to him, except by way of revelation, or from behind a curtain, or that He sends a messenger, then he reveals, with His permission, what He wills. Surely, He is High, Wise. [51] **And in similar way, We have revealed to you a Spirit from Our command. You did not know earlier what is the Book or what is 'Iman' (true faith), but We have made it (the Qur'ān) a light with which We guide whomsoever We will from among Our slaves. And indeed you are guiding (people) to a straight path,** [52] **the path of Allah, the One to whom belongs all that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth. Be aware that towards Allah all matters shall finally return.** [53]

Commentary

The first of the above verses (51) was revealed in response to a hostile Jewish demand. As mentioned by Baghawī, Qurṭubī and others, the Jews asked the Holy Prophet ﷺ, "How can we believe in you while you neither see Allah Ta'ālā, nor do you speak to Him face to face, as Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام used to see and converse with Allah Ta'ālā?"

The Holy Prophet ﷺ told the Jews that it is wrong to say that Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام has seen Allah Ta'ālā. Then this verse was revealed

to announce that it is not possible for any human being to converse with Allah Ta'ālā face to face in this world. Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام also did not hear Allah Ta'ālā face to face, but only heard the voice from behind a curtain.

This verse also tells us that there are only three ways in which Allah Ta'ālā speaks to a human being. One is '*waḥy*' which is infusion of something in the heart. It can happen while one is awake, and it can also happen during sleep in the form of a dream as stated in many *aḥādīth* that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said, اُلقِيَ فى روعى (This has been infused in my heart. And the dreams of the prophets عليهم السلام are also a form of wahy, because Satan cannot find his way in them. In case of dreams, the words do not usually come from Allah Ta'ālā; only the subject matter is infused in the mind which is then rendered by the prophets in their own words.

The second way in which Allah may address a person, as mentioned in the above verses, is that Allah speaks from behind a curtain, as happened to Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام on Mount Ṭūr, where he heard the speech of Allah Ta'ālā, but did not see Him. Therefore he asked Allah Ta'ālā to show Himself. The reply was in negative, as mentioned by the Holy Qur'ān in sūrah A'rāf (7:143).

And this curtain which prevents man from seeing Allah Ta'ālā is not something which can hide Allah Ta'ālā, because nothing can hide His All-Pervasive Light. Rather, it is the weakness of man's vision that becomes a curtain against seeing Allah. That is why when his vision would be strengthened in Paradise, every dweller of Heaven will be favoured with ability to see Allah Ta'ālā, as per the creed of Ahl-us-Sunnah wal-Jamā'ah in accordance with the explanations of correct *aḥādīth*.

This rule that no one can converse face to face with Allah Ta'ālā, without any curtain in-between, pertains to this world. The specific mention of 'human being' in this verse is because the intention here is to address mankind. Otherwise, apparently Allah Ta'ālā does not speak face to face even with the angels, as stated by Sayyidnā Jibra'īl عليه السلام in a narration of Tirmidhī, "I had become very close, and yet there were seventy-thousand more curtains." And if the face to face conversation of the Holy Prophet ﷺ with Allah Ta'ālā during the Night of Ascension

(*Lailat-ul-mi'rāj*) is proved, as stated by certain learned persons, it would not negate this rule, because that conversation did not take place in this world, but in the Heavens. (Allah knows best)

The third method is mentioned in the verse as أَوْ يُرْسِلَ رَسُوْلاً "that He sends a messenger" (42:51). The messenger could be Jibra'īl عليه السلام or any other angel who may carry Allah Ta'ālā's message, and read it out to the prophet. And this has been the most common way.The whole of Glorious Qur'ān has been revealed in this fashion through angels. It should be noted that the word '*waḥy*' has been explained above to mean infusion in mind or heart only, but this word is often used for all kinds of Divine discourses also, as narrated in a lengthy *ḥadīth* of Bukhārī where the message sent through an angel has also been termed as one kind of '*waḥy*'. And there are two forms in which the angel carries the message. Sometimes he appears in his original form, and sometimes in the human form. (Allah knows best)

مَا كُنْتَ تَدْرِىْ مَا الْكِتٰبُ وَلاَ الْاِيْمَانُ وَلٰكِنْ (You did not know earlier what is the Book or what is "Īmān', but We have made it a light with which We guide whomsoever we will from among Our slaves - 42:52). This verse is a complement of the subject of the first verse. The gist is that in this world, nobody has ever seen, nor can ever see and converse face to face with Allah Ta'ālā. However, Allah Ta'ālā does send '*waḥy*' to His chosen bondsmen in three ways described in the first verse. And in accordance with Allah Ta'ālā's practice, '*waḥy*' is sent to the Holy Prophet ﷺ as well. The demand of Jews that Allah Ta'ālā should speak to him face to face is simply a display of ignorance and hostility. That is why Allah Ta'ālā has stated that whatever knowledge a man obtains, even a prophet for that matter, is all a grant of Allah Ta'ālā. Until Allah Ta'ālā tells them through '*waḥy*', they would neither be aware of any Book nor would they know the details of faith. Unawareness of the Book before '*waḥy*' is quite obvious; absence of knowledge of faith means that its details, rules and regulations, and its exalted place become known to a prophet after '*waḥy*', not before it, otherwise it is proved with consensus of the ummah that whomever Allah chooses to make His Messenger or Prophet, He gives him faith and belief right from the beginning of his birth; his faith is engraved in his nature. These chosen people are firm believers, even before prophethood and before '*waḥy*' is sent to them. Principles of belief become

a part of their nature and behaviour. That is why all the prophets were opposed by their people and they piled up all sorts of allegations against them, but no one had ever accused a prophet of idolatry, even before he was appointed as a prophet. Qurṭubī, in his Tafsīr, and Qāḍī 'Ayād in Shifā' have dealt with this subject in full detail.

Alḥamdulillah
the commentary on
Sūrah Shūrā
ends here.

Sūrah Az-Zukhruf

The Gold

Sūrah Az-Zukhruf is Makkī. It has 89 Verses and 7 Sections

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 8

حٰمٓ ﴿١﴾ وَالْكِتٰبِ الْمُبِيْنِ ﴿٢﴾ اِنَّا جَعَلْنٰهُ قُرْءٰنًا عَرَبِيًّا لَّعَلَّكُمْ
تَعْقِلُوْنَ ﴿٣﴾ وَاِنَّهٗ فِيْٓ اُمِّ الْكِتٰبِ لَدَيْنَا لَعَلِيٌّ حَكِيْمٌ ﴿٤﴾ اَفَنَضْرِبُ
عَنْكُمُ الذِّكْرَ صَفْحًا اَنْ كُنْتُمْ قَوْمًا مُّسْرِفِيْنَ ﴿٥﴾ وَكَمْ اَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ
نَّبِيٍّ فِي الْاَوَّلِيْنَ ﴿٦﴾ وَمَا يَاْتِيْهِمْ مِّنْ نَّبِيٍّ اِلَّا كَانُوْا بِهٖ يَسْتَهْزِءُوْنَ
﴿٧﴾ فَاَهْلَكْنَآ اَشَدَّ مِنْهُمْ بَطْشًا وَّمَضٰى مَثَلُ الْاَوَّلِيْنَ ﴿٨﴾

Ḥā Mīm. [1] By the manifest Book, [2] We have made it an Arabic Qur'ān, so that you may understand. [3] And it is, in the Mother of the Book (the Preserved Tablet) with us, surely sublime, full of wisdom. [4] Shall We remove the advice away from you because you are a transgressing people? [5] And how many a messenger have We sent to the earlier people! [6] And no messenger came to them, but they used to mock at him. [7] So We have destroyed those who were stronger than these (people of Makkah) in power, and the example of the earlier people has already passed. [8]

Commentary

This Sūrah is Makkī, although Muqātil رحمه الله تعالیٰ has said that the verse وَاسْئَلْ مَنْ اَرْسَلْنَا (43:45) is Madanī, and according to another view, this

Sūrah was revealed in Heaven during *Lailat-ul-Mi'rāj* (the Night of Ascention) (Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī) - Allah knows best.

Ḥā Mīm- Only Allah knows its meaning.

وَالْكِتٰبِ الْمُبِيْنِ (By the manifest Book - 43:2) The book in this verse refers to the Holy Qur'ān. Whenever Allah swears by anything, it is usually an argument for the statement that follows. Swearing by the Qur'ān in this verse is an indication that the Qur'ān, by virtue of being a miracle, is a proof in itself of its being a Divine Book. To call it a 'manifest book' means that its subjects consisting of exhortations and advices are easily understandable; but as far as deduction of the precepts of 'Sharī'ah' is concerned, it certainly is a difficult job which cannot be performed without complete capability of *'ijtihād'*. This point has been clarified in Sūrah Alqamar, verse 17, وَلَقَدْ يَسَّرْنَا الْقُرْاٰنَ لِلذِّكْرِ فَهَلْ مِنْ مُّدَّكِرٍ (And indeed We have made the Qur'ān easy for seeking advice. So, is there one to seek advice? - 54-17). Here, it has been stated that the Qur'ān is easy for obtaining advice. Hence, it does not necessarily follow that *ijtihād* and inferring injunctions will be easy also; rather, it is proved through other evidences that full expertise in related subjects is a necessary condition for this exercise.

A Preacher must not give up his preaching due to disappointment

اَفَنَضْرِبُ عَنْكُمُ الذِّكْرَ صَفْحًا اَنْ كُنْتُمْ قَوْمًا مُّسْرِفِيْنَ (Shall we remove the advice away from you because you are a transgressing people? - 43:5) The meaning is that We will not give up advising you through the Qur'ān, no matter how rebellious and disobedient you may become. This tells us that the person who is engaged in preaching and inviting others towards Islam should carry the message to everybody; he must not give up preaching to some people or any group simply because they are non-believers, highly irreligious, sinners and transgressors.

Verses 9 - 25

وَلَئِنْ سَاَلْتَهُمْ مَّنْ خَلَقَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضَ لَيَقُوْلُنَّ خَلَقَهُنَّ الْعَزِيْزُ
الْعَلِيْمُ ﴿۹﴾ الَّذِىْ جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْاَرْضَ مَهْدًا وَّجَعَلَ لَكُمْ فِيْهَا سُبُلًا

لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُوْنَ ﴿١٠﴾ وَالَّذِىْ نَزَّلَ مِنَ السَّمَآءِ مَآءًۢ بِقَدَرٍ فَاَنْشَرْنَا
بِهٖ بَلْدَةً مَّيْتًا ۚ كَذٰلِكَ تُخْرَجُوْنَ ﴿١١﴾ وَالَّذِىْ خَلَقَ الْاَزْوَاجَ كُلَّهَا
وَجَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِّنَ الْفُلْكِ وَالْاَنْعَامِ مَا تَرْكَبُوْنَ ﴿١٢﴾ لِتَسْتَوٗا عَلٰى
ظُهُوْرِهٖ ثُمَّ تَذْكُرُوْا نِعْمَةَ رَبِّكُمْ اِذَا اسْتَوَيْتُمْ عَلَيْهِ وَتَقُوْلُوْا سُبْحٰنَ
الَّذِىْ سَخَّرَ لَنَا هٰذَا وَمَا كُنَّا لَهٗ مُقْرِنِيْنَ ﴿١٣﴾ وَاِنَّآ اِلٰى رَبِّنَا لَمُنْقَلِبُوْنَ
﴿١٤﴾ وَجَعَلُوْا لَهٗ مِنْ عِبَادِهٖ جُزْءًا ؕ اِنَّ الْاِنْسَانَ لَكَفُوْرٌ مُّبِيْنٌ ﴿١٥﴾
اَمِ اتَّخَذَ مِمَّا يَخْلُقُ بَنٰتٍ وَّاَصْفٰىكُمْ بِالْبَنِيْنَ ﴿١٦﴾ وَاِذَا بُشِّرَ اَحَدُهُمْ
بِمَا ضَرَبَ لِلرَّحْمٰنِ مَثَلًا ظَلَّ وَجْهُهٗ مُسْوَدًّا وَّهُوَ كَظِيْمٌ ﴿١٧﴾ اَوَ
مَنْ يُّنَشَّؤُا فِى الْحِلْيَةِ وَهُوَ فِى الْخِصَامِ غَيْرُ مُبِيْنٍ ﴿١٨﴾ وَجَعَلُوا
الْمَلٰٓئِكَةَ الَّذِيْنَ هُمْ عِبٰدُ الرَّحْمٰنِ اِنَاثًا ؕ اَشَهِدُوْا خَلْقَهُمْ ؕ سَتُكْتَبُ
شَهَادَتُهُمْ وَيُسْئَلُوْنَ ﴿١٩﴾ وَقَالُوْا لَوْ شَآءَ الرَّحْمٰنُ مَا عَبَدْنٰهُمْ ؕ
مَا لَهُمْ بِذٰلِكَ مِنْ عِلْمٍ ۗ اِنْ هُمْ اِلَّا يَخْرُصُوْنَ ﴿٢٠﴾ اَمْ اٰتَيْنٰهُمْ كِتٰبًا
مِّنْ قَبْلِهٖ فَهُمْ بِهٖ مُسْتَمْسِكُوْنَ ﴿٢١﴾ بَلْ قَالُوْٓا اِنَّا وَجَدْنَآ اٰبَآءَنَا عَلٰٓى
اُمَّةٍ وَّاِنَّا عَلٰٓى اٰثٰرِهِمْ مُّهْتَدُوْنَ ﴿٢٢﴾ وَكَذٰلِكَ مَآ اَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ
فِىْ قَرْيَةٍ مِّنْ نَّذِيْرٍ اِلَّا قَالَ مُتْرَفُوْهَآ ۙ اِنَّا وَجَدْنَآ اٰبَآءَنَا عَلٰٓى اُمَّةٍ وَّاِنَّا
عَلٰٓى اٰثٰرِهِمْ مُّقْتَدُوْنَ ﴿٢٣﴾ قٰلَ اَوَلَوْ جِئْتُكُمْ بِاَهْدٰى مِمَّا وَجَدْتُّمْ
عَلَيْهِ اٰبَآءَكُمْ ؕ قَالُوْٓا اِنَّا بِمَآ اُرْسِلْتُمْ بِهٖ كٰفِرُوْنَ ﴿٢٤﴾ فَانْتَقَمْنَا مِنْهُمْ
فَانْظُرْ كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُكَذِّبِيْنَ ﴿٢٥﴾

And should you ask them as to who has created the heavens and the earth, they will certainly say, "They are created by the All-Mighty, the All-Knowing," [9] **the One who has made the earth a cradle for you, and has made for you pathways therein, so that you may be guided,** [10] **and the One who has sent down water from the sky in due measure, then We have revived with it a dead**

town.__ In the same way, you will be brought out (alive from the graves), [11] – and the One who has created all the pairs, and has made for you the boats and the cattle that you ride, [12] so that you may mount on their backs, then recall the favour of your Lord after having mounted on it and say, 'Pure is the One who has subjugated this for us, and We were not able to have control over it, [13] and of course, towards our Lord we have to return.' [14]

And they have ascribed to Him (that He is composed of) parts, (and that too) out of His slaves. Surely, man is openly ungrateful. [15] Is it that He has adopted daughters from those whom He has created, and chosen you for (having) sons? [16] And when one of them is given the good news of (the birth of) that which he has claimed to be like *Raḥmān* (i.e. the daughters), his face turns black, and he becomes choked with sorrow. [17] Is it that (Allah has chosen) those (as His offspring) who are grown up in ornaments, and who cannot express themselves in debate clearly? [18] And they have held angels, who are the slaves of the *Raḥmān*, as females. Have they witnessed their creation? Their testimony will be recorded, and they will be questioned. [19] And they say, "Had the *Raḥmān* so willed, we will not have worshipped them." They have no knowledge of that. They do nothing but make conjectures. [20] Or have We given to them a book before this, and they are adhering to it? [21] Instead, they say, "We have found our fathers on a certain way, and we are on their footprints, fully guided." [22] And similarly, We did not send a warner to a town before you, but its affluent people said, "We have found our fathers on a certain way, and we are following their footprints." [23] He said, "Even if I bring to you something better in guidance than that on which you have found your fathers?" They said, "We totally disbelieve in what you are sent with." [24] So, We took revenge from them. Now look, how was the end of those who rejected (Our messengers). [25]

Commentary

جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْأَرْضَ مَهْدًا (has made the earth a cradle for you - 10) meaning that the comfort provided by the earth is that of a cradle; its apparent look of being a plain floor does not negate its being spherical.

وَجَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِّنَ الْفُلْكِ وَالْأَنْعَامِ مَا تَرْكَبُونَ (and has made for you the boats and the

cattle that you ride, - 12). There are two kinds of means of transport employed by man - one those vehicles which are made by man himself, and two the animals in whose creation human effort is not involved at all. 'Boats' include all kinds of man-made vehicles, and 'cattle' include all the animals used for riding. Both these means of transport are great blessings of Allah Ta'ālā. That cattle are Allah's great blessings is obvious, because despite their being many times stronger than man, Allah Almighty has made them so submissive to him that even a child leads them to wherever he wants through a hatter or mor-string. Similarly the man made vehicles, right from the bicycles to the aeroplanes and the space-crafts are also great blessings of Allah Almighty, because they are, though, made by man apparently, there is no other than Allah Ta'ālā who has provided man with ability and techniques to manufacture them? Allah Almighty, the All-Powerful is the One Who has endowed the human intellect with the power that moulds iron like wax. And besides, all the raw materials used in their manufacturing and their properties are direct creations of Allah Almighty.

ثُمَّ تَذْكُرُوا نِعْمَةَ رَبِّكُم (then recall the favour of your Lord - 13). This tells us that a sensible and alert person should not display negligence, carelessness or his need-free of the divine help while enjoying the blessings of the Actual Benefactor, rather he should acknowledge that it is a reward from Allah Almighty, obliging him to be grateful and to display his impotence and humility. Actually this is the difference between an infidel and a *Mu'min* that an infidel uses the good things of this world carelessly and negligently, while the *Mu'min* congnizant of the blessings of Allah bows his head to Allah Almighty in humility. It is for this reason that the Qur'ān and *ḥadīth* have taught supplications for patience, steadfastness and gratefulness, and if anyone makes a habit of supplicating those prayers in his daily life while getting up, sitting down, walking about, etc., then all his (or hers) permissible activities turn into acts of worship. These supplications are collected by 'Allāmah Ibn-ul-Jazrī in his book Al-Ḥisn-ul-Ḥaṣīn, and Maulānā Thanawi in Munajat-e-Maqbūl.

Supplications of a traveler

سُبْحٰنَ الَّذِي سَخَّرَلَنَا هٰذَا (Pure is the One who has subjugated this for us - 13). These words of supplication are to be said when mounting a transport.

This was the practice of the Holy Prophet ﷺ according to many narrations. The *mustaḥab* (preferable) way to ride a transport, as stated by Sayyidnā 'Alī ؓ, is to say بِسْمِ اللّٰہِ *'Bismillāh'* (With the name of Allah) when one is putting the first foot on the animal or the vehicle, and after one has set himself or herself on the transport, one should say اَلْحَمْدُلِلّٰہِ *'Alḥamdulillāh'* (All praise belongs to Allah), and then one should say the words mentioned in this verse from سُبْحٰنَ الَّذِیْ سَخَّرَلَنَا upto لَمُنْقَلِبُوْنَ (Qurṭubī). Moreover according to some reports, the Holy Prophet ﷺ, after saying these words, used to supplicate in the following words also:

اَللّٰھُمَّ اَنْتَ الصَّاحِبُ فِی السَّفَرِ وَالْخَلِیْفَةُ فِی الْاَھْلِ وَالْمَالِ اَللّٰھُمَّ اِنِّیْ اَعُوْذُبِکَ مِنْ وَّعْثَآءِ السَّفَرِ وَکَآبَةِ الْمُنْقَلَبِ، وَالْحَوْرِ بَعْدَ الْکَوْرِ وَسُوْءِ الْمَنْظَرِ فِی الْاَھْلِ وَالْمَالِ.

"O Allah, you are my companion in the journey, and my substitute for my family. O Allah, I seek your refuge from the sufferings of the journey, and from coming back in a sad situation, and from a bad state of being after a good one, and from a bad scenario appearing to me about my family and my belongings."

According to one narration, the following words are added to the above supplication,

اَللّٰھُمَّ لَآ اِلٰهَ اِلاَّ اَنْتَ ظَلَمْتُ نَفْسِیْ فَاغْفِرْلِیْ اِنَّه‘ لاَ یَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوْبَ اِلاَّ اَنْتَ

O Allah, there is no god but You. I have done wrong to myself; so forgive me. Surely, no one can forgive the sins, but You alone. (Qurṭubī)

وَمَا کُنَّا لَه مُقْرِنِیْنَ (and we were not able to have control over it - 13). This statement is as true for mechanical means of transport as for cattle and animals, because if Allah Ta'ālā had not created their raw materials, or had not endowed them with their particular properties, or had not endowed the human intellect with capability to discover those properties, even the whole universe, acting together in unison, could not have produced these vehicles.

وَاِنَّآ اِلٰی رَبِّنَا لَمُنْقَلِبُوْنَ (and of course, towards our Lord we have to return - 14). These words teach us that every time a man embarks on a journey, he should think of his last arduous journey to the Hereafter also, which one has to undertake in all circumstances; – and the only way to make it easy is to have a vehicle of good deeds.

وَجَعَلُوْا لَهٗ مِنْ عِبَادِهٖ جُزْءًا (And they have attributed to Him [that He is composed of] parts [and that too] out of His slaves...43:15) 'parts' in this verse means 'offspring', because the polytheists used to say that angels are daughters of Allah, and by using the word 'parts' instead of 'offspring' the fallacy of their claim has been pointed out on pure logical ground. The gist of the argument is that had Allah any offspring, that offspring will have been His part, because a son is a part of his father, and it is a rule of logic that an entity that consists of parts is dependent upon its parts for its full existence. This will then necessarily mean that Allah Ta'ālā is also dependent on His offspring, which is obviously impossible, because dependence of any kind, being a negation of the Divine Majesty, is out of question in Allah's case.

اَوَمَنْ يُّنَشَّؤُا فِى الْحِلْيَةِ (Is it that (Allah has chosen) those (as His offspring) who are grown up in ornaments,... 43:18). This tells us that use of ornaments and adornment in accordance with 'Shari'ah is permissible for women. As such, there is consensus on this issue, but at the same time the manner of speech indicates that getting so much involved in adornment that one is busy in it the whole day long, is not proper; it is not only a symptom of one's being short-sighted, but also a cause of it.

وَهُوَ فِى الْخِصَامِ غَيْرُ مُبِيْنٍ (and who cannot express themselves in debate clearly - 18). This reflects the reality that a great majority of women do not have the same ability as men to express their feelings clearly. Therefore, if it comes to argumentation, it is difficult for them to prove their own contention and to refute the other's arguments in a clear manner. But this applies to the majority. If some women are eloquent in their speech and excel even men in this regard, it does not go against this verse, because the rule applies to the majority, and not to every single individual.

Verses 26 - 30

وَاِذْ قَالَ اِبْرٰهِيْمُ لِاَبِيْهِ وَقَوْمِهٖٓ اِنَّنِىْ بَرَآءٌ مِّمَّا تَعْبُدُوْنَ ﴿۲۶﴾ اِلَّا الَّذِىْ
فَطَرَنِىْ فَاِنَّهٗ سَيَهْدِيْنِ ﴿۲۷﴾ وَجَعَلَهَا كَلِمَةًۢ بَاقِيَةً فِىْ عَقِبِهٖ لَعَلَّهُمْ
يَرْجِعُوْنَ ﴿۲۸﴾ بَلْ مَتَّعْتُ هٰٓؤُلَآءِ وَاٰبَآءَهُمْ حَتّٰى جَآءَهُمُ الْحَقُّ

وَرَسُوْلٌ مُّبِيْنٌ ﴿٢٩﴾ وَلَمَّا جَآءَهُمُ الْحَقُّ قَالُوْا هٰذَا سِحْرٌ وَّاِنَّا بِهٖ كٰفِرُوْنَ ﴿٣٠﴾

And (recall) when Ibrāhīm said to his father and to his people, "I disown that which you worship, [26] **except the One who has originated me; so He will guide me."** [27] **And he made it a word lasting among his posterity, so that they may return.** [28] **But, I gave these and their fathers enjoyment, until the truth came to them, and a messenger who explains (it).** [29] **And when the truth came to them, they said, "This is magic, and we totally disbelieve in it."** [30]

Commentary

وَاِذْ قَالَ اِبْرٰهِيْمُ (And [recall] when Ibrāhīm said to his father and to his people,..... 43:26) At the end of the previous verses, Allah Ta'ālā had stated that the *'mushrikīn'* (polytheists) of Arabia had no argument in favour of their *'shirk'* (polytheism) except that they were carrying on the customs of their forefathers. Obviously, sticking to such customs against logical and historical arguments is far from truth and justice. Now the point made in the present verses is that, even if they are adamant on following their ancestors, why do they not follow Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام who is the most noble of their ancestors, and it is taken by themselves as a matter of pride to be among his offspring. He was not only a believer in *'tauḥīd'* (Oneness of Allah) who emphatically directed all his children to remain adherent to this belief, but his life-long behavior also indicates that following forefathers against logical and historical proofs is not permissible. When he was ordained prophethood in the world, all his people were polytheists in pursuit of the customs of their forefathers, but he, instead of blindly following his forefathers, announced his dissociation from his people, according to the dictates of positive proofs; hence his declaration: اِنَّنِيْ بَرَآءٌ مِّمَّا تَعْبُدُوْنَ "I disown that which you worship" (43:26).

We find from this verse that if anyone lives among a group or people who are misguided or involved in bad deeds, and his silence about their attitude may be construed as being agreeable to them, then it is not enough for him to simply correct his own beliefs and deeds, rather he has to disown their beliefs and deeds as well. This is what Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام did - he not only made his belief and actions distinctly different in

practice, but he also disowned their belief and deeds vocally.

وَجَعَلَهَا كَلِمَةًۢ بَاقِيَةً فِىْ عَقِبِهٖ (And he made it a word lasting among his posterity.) It means that Ibrāhīm ﷺ did not keep the belief in *'tauḥīd'* restricted to himself, rather he emphasized upon his posterity also to remain firm on this faith, as a result of which a large number of his posterity adhered to *tauḥīd.* In Makkah and its surroundings, there were many blessed souls, even till the advent of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, who had remained steadfast in the original *'dīn'* of Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام.

We learn from this verse that it is one of the obligatory duties of a Muslim to try his best to put his or her children on the path of the correct religion and to make them practice it throughout their lives. The Holy Qur'ān tells us that Sayyidnā Yaqūb ﷺ also had directed his sons, shortly before his death, to remain firm on the correct faith. As such, it is necessary, as a consistent practice of the prophets, to employ one's best possible efforts to reform the morals and deeds of his or her children. So to say, there are many ways to reform one's offspring which should be used according to the situation, but Shaikh Abdul Wahhāb Sha'rānī رحمه الله تعالى has said in his book *Laṭā'if-ul-Minan wal-Akhlāq* that the most effective way for the betterment of one's offspring in matters pertaining to *'dīn'* is that the parents should pray to Allah regularly to make them true practicing Muslims . Alas! The negligence of parents from this easy way is becoming very common these days, and the parents themselves are witnessing the ill effects of this negligence.

Verses 31 - 32

وَقَالُوْا لَوْلَا نُزِّلَ هٰذَا الْقُرْاٰنُ عَلٰى رَجُلٍ مِّنَ الْقَرْيَتَيْنِ عَظِيْمٍ ﴿۳۱﴾
اَهُمْ يَقْسِمُوْنَ رَحْمَتَ رَبِّكَ ؕ نَحْنُ قَسَمْنَا بَيْنَهُمْ مَّعِيْشَتَهُمْ فِى
الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا وَرَفَعْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ فَوْقَ بَعْضٍ دَرَجٰتٍ لِّيَتَّخِذَ بَعْضُهُمْ
بَعْضًا سُخْرِيًّا ؕ وَرَحْمَتُ رَبِّكَ خَيْرٌ مِّمَّا يَجْمَعُوْنَ ﴿۳۲﴾

And they say, "Why was this Qur'ān not revealed on a great man from (either of) the two towns?" [31] Is it they who distribute the mercy of your Lord? We have distributed among them their livelihood in the worldly

life, and have raised some of them over others in ranks, so that some of them may put some others to work. And the mercy of your Lord is much better than what they accumulate. [32]

Commentary

Allah Taʻālā has in these verses, has replied to an objection of the pagans of Arabia used to be raised against the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Actually, they were not prepared to accept, at the first place, that a man could be a messenger of Allah Taʻālā. The Holy Qur'ān has referred, at many places, to their objection that they could not accept Sayyidnā Muhammad ﷺ as a messenger of Allah, while he eats and drinks and walks about in the market places like any ordinary man. When it was clarified through many verses of the Qur'ān that not only the Holy Prophet ﷺ, but all the prophets who came to this world, were human beings, they started advancing another argument that if prophethood had to be bestowed upon a human being, why was it not given to some wealthy man of a high rank and position from Makkah or Ṭā'if instead of the Holy Prophet ﷺ who was not so wealthy? According to some narrations, they had proposed the names of Walīd Ibn Mughīrah and ʻUtbah Ibn Rabīʻah from Makkah, and ʻUrwah Ibn Masʻūd Thaqafī, Ḥabīb Ibn ʻAmr Thaqafī or Kinānah Ibn ʻAbdiyālīl from Ṭā'if. (Rūḥ-ul-Maʻānī)

Allah Almighty has given two answers to this objection. The second answer is found in the next verses which will be explained there, while the present verse (32) has provided the first answer in the words, "Is it they who distribute the mercy of your Lord?". "Mercy of your Lord" refers here to 'prophethood' and the gist of the answer is that appointing someone as a prophet is a mercy from Allah which he bestows upon and allocates to human beings on the basis of His absolute wisdom, and according to His exclusive discretion for which He needs not to consult anyone, nor has anyone a right to interfere with it. You have no concern with distribution of prophethood so that your advice should be sought before anyone is made a prophet. Your intellect and understanding is too deficient to be entrusted with selecting suitable persons for the office of prophethood, or for the distribution of this divine mercy among people. How can you distribute among people an office as high as prophethood, while you have no ability to distribute something that is much lower and easier, that is, your economy. You are not good enough even to carry out

the distribution of your wealth and means of sustenance. We know that if you are entrusted with this responsibility, you will not be able to manage it even for one day, and the whole system will simply collapse. That is why Allah Ta'ālā has not assigned the distribution of provisions in this world to you; rather He has kept it in His own hands. Since this comparatively ordinary work cannot be entrusted to you, how can a great job like distribution of prophethood be given in your hands?

This is what the above verses mean, but in the context of replying to the *'mushrikīn'*, many economic principles are laid down and indications are given by Allah Ta'ālā regarding the economic system of the world; their brief explanation is necessary here.

The Natural system of Distribution of wealth

نَحْنُ قَسَمْنَا بَيْنَهُم مَّعِيشَتَهُم (We have distributed among them their livelihood). This is to say that Allah in His infinite wisdom, has devised such a system for the world that everybody is dependent on another for meeting his needs. Thus all the people, bound in this mutual inter-dependence, are fulfilling the needs of the whole society. This verse has made it quite clear that Allah Almighty has not assigned the work of distributing livelihood to any human organization or authority that works out a plan (as claimed by the socialist theory) how to define the needs of a society, how to meet those needs, how to allocate the means of production to various channels, and how to distribute the income, and on what basis. Instead, all these functions rest with Allah Ta'ālā. What it means is that by making every person dependent upon another, an automatic system has been developed that may solve these issues, with the only condition that it is not hindered by unnatural factors like monopolies etc. This system of mutual interdependence is known in modern economic terminology as the 'supply and demand mechanism'. The natural law of 'supply and demand' is that shortage in the supply of an item results in an increase in its price, and thus attracts more factors of production towards its production, so that they may earn more profit. But when the production outpaces the demand, its prices decrease, and so does the profit, thereby diverting the means of production towards more profitable items. Islam has employed this natural mechanism of supply and demand to produce and distribute wealth, and has not assigned the distribution of livelihood to any organization under ordinary circumstances. The reason is that human

planning, however advanced it may be, cannot take into account every element of human necessities; such social issues are usually resolved through a natural process that works in an automatic manner. If such problems are entrusted to human planning, it can only result in artificial restraints imposed on the natural human freedom. For example, the fact that the hours of daylight are for working, and the night is meant for sleeping was not determined by any social contract or by human planning; it came about through nature's automatic process. Similarly, who should marry whom is automatically arranged in accordance with the natural system of personal inclinations; nobody has even thought of arranging it through planning. If the question of selecting a particular field of academic specialization is entrusted to the planning of a government, instead of one's own inclination and taste, it will result in nothing but coercion and compulsion which may, in turn, disturb and spoil the natural human life. Similarly, the economic system is taken care of by Allah's wisdom and power; everybody knows in his heart what he wants to do, which job is more suitable for him, and which he can perform properly. As such, everybody, even if he is a sweeper, is happy loving his work, and is proud of it.

However, unlike capitalism, Islam has not given so much freedom to the individuals as allows them to accumulate wealth by any means, lawful or unlawful, and deprive others of their livelihood. Islam has therefore drawn a clear line between *ḥalāl* (permissible) and *ḥarām* (impermissible) sources of income. It has, on the one hand, totally prohibited usury or interest, speculative transactions, hoarding and gambling (which in its technical sense in Islamic law is much more general than its lexical meaning in English), and on the other hand, has levied *zakāh*, *'ushr*, etc., even on permitted income. And thus Islam has closed the doors of those social ills that are found in the present day capitalistic system. If despite all this, monopolies are created at any time, government has been permitted to intervene and break them up. Details on this subject can be seen in the author's Urdu books on 'The Issue of Interest' 'Distribution of Wealth in Islam' and 'Economic Reforms in Islamic System'.

The truth about economic equality

وَرَفَعْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ فَوْقَ بَعْضٍ دَرَجٰتٍ (and have raised some of them over others in

ranks). This tells us that economic equality, in the sense that the income of all the individuals of this world should be equal, is neither desirable nor practically feasible. The reason is that Allah Ta'ālā has charged every member of this universe with some duties, and has given them rights in proportion to their obligations. All the creatures, excepting man, are liable for the least duties in the sense that there is nothing like lawful, unlawful or prohibited for them, and hence they have the least rights. Accordingly, man has been given vast freedom in dealing with them; he can use them in any way for his benefit, subject to some minor restrictions. He uses some animals as his food, some he rides and some creatures are trodden under his feet, but these things are not considered to be the denial of the rights of those creatures, because their duties are very few, hence their rights are also to that proportion. Human beings and jinns have been given more responsibilities in their duties than any other creature of this universe in that they are accountable to Allah Ta'ālā in each utterance, each deed each move and each movement; if they do not carry out their duties, they are liable to punishment in the Hereafter. That is the reason why Allah Ta'ālā has given much more rights to human beings and jinns as compared to other creatures. And then, even among human beings, those whose duties and obligations are more than others have been given more rights as well. As such, prophets علیہم السلام whose responsibilities exceed those of all other human beings, were given more rights than others in many respects.

The same principle has been applied by Allah Ta'ālā to the economic system also. Allah has given economic advantages and rights to anyone in accordance with his duties and obligations. It is obvious that equality in duties and obligations is not possible, and differences are unavoidable. It is simply not feasible that everybody's economic benefits i.e. income and duties be exactly equal, because they depend on one's natural abilities which include physical strength, health, intellectual power, age, level of intelligence, efficiency and quickness; it is obvious to everyone that it is beyond the capability of even the most advanced communist state to create homogeneity and equality among people in respect of these qualities. When differences in the abilities of human beings are unavoidable, there have to be differences in their economic duties. And since economic rights are linked with these duties, differences in economic

rights i.e. incomes are also unavoidable, because if everybody's income is made equal, while duties continue to be different, equity and justice cannot be established. It is now quite evident that complete equality in incomes can never be fair at any time. As such the communist claim that equality will be achieved in the ultimate stage of completion of communism, is neither practicable nor equitable.

To determine whose duties are more and whose are less and to determine their rights accordingly is an extremely sensitive and difficult task, and man does not have any perfect standard, as yet, to measure it. Sometimes one gets the feeling that an expert and experienced engineer has earned in only one hour what a common unskilled laborer could not, even by carrying tons of earth during the whole day. But in all fairness, one has to concede that the whole day's carefree hard work of the laborer just cannot match the burden of responsibility of the engineer. Besides, the income of the engineer is not compensation for only one hour's work, but it really is compensation partly for the exercise of the mind, burning of the mid-night oil and effort put in to get engineering education and training, and then in getting experience and expertise. In its early days, communism has accepted the differences in incomes and as such there are vast differences in the incomes of different categories of the populace in all the communist countries. But where they have slipped is that they have given control over all means of production to the government, thereby determination of duties and commensurate distribution of incomes has also come under the control of the government. As mentioned earlier, man does not have a perfect standard to measure that the rights are in accordance with one's duties; as such a few functionaries of the government in communist countries have the power to dole out, as much as they want, to any person and withhold, as much as they want from anyone. In the first place, such discretionary powers give rise to corruption, nepotism etc. Secondly, even if one presumes that all the functionaries of the government are angels, and they truly desire to distribute the incomes in the country according to the dictates of justice and equity, then what is the measure through which they may be able to determine the difference in the duties of an engineer and a laborer, and in that context what should be the difference between their incomes?

The fact is that the right decision in this matter is beyond human

understanding, and that is why it has been kept in the domain of nature. This is what Allah Ta'ālā has hinted at in the verse under discussion which says, "and have raised some of them over others in ranks". Instead of leaving human beings determine this difference, Allah Ta'ālā has kept it in His own hands in the sense that by associating others in the fulfillment of everyone's needs, a system has been developed where everyone is constrained to pay the other's rightful dues for the fulfillment of his own needs. Here also, the mechanism of supply and demand based upon mutual dependence, determines everybody's income. In other words, everyone determines for himself the compensation that is adequate for the responsibilities he has undertaken; if he is offered less than that, he will not agree, and if he demands more than that, the other person will not agree to get the work done by him. This is exactly what the verse says: "so that some of them may put some other to work.") meaning that Allah has made the incomes of the people different, so that one person may employ another; if their incomes had been the same, nobody will have been of use to another person.

Of course, in abnormal situations, big capitalists may take undue advantage of this natural system of supply and demand, and may compel poor people to work for lesser wages than their actual entitlement. In order to prevent this, Islam has, in the first place, given thorough injunctions of *ḥalāl* (lawful) and *ḥarām* (unlawful), and a wide-ranged code of ethics based on the concept of the Day of Retribution. But if at any time, such a situation does appear, then the Islamic government has been given an authority to determine the wages and salaries during those abnormal conditions. But this authorization is limited to the abnormal conditions, and there is no need to let the government have control of all means of production for this purpose, because its harm far outweighs its gains.

The Meaning of Islamic equality

It is quite clear from the above discussion that complete equality in incomes is neither a requirement of equity and justice, nor has it been actually established anywhere; It is not possible or desired in Islam either. Of course, the equality that Islam has established is in the matters of law, social behavior and in honoring the rights of everyone. What it means is that everybody is equal in exercising one's legal, civil and social rights for

obtaining his economic dues as determined by the natural system mentioned above. What it does not mean is that a rich man or a man of rank and position should obtain his right with ease and dignity, while a poor man has to knock on the doors and has to lose his respect and dignity to obtain his rights, or that the law should protect the rights of the rich, and leave the poor to fend for themselves. This kind of inequality is not tolerable in Islam, and this is what Sayyidnā Abū Bakr Ṣiddīq ؓ had said in one of his addresses:

وَاللّٰہ ما عندی اقوىٰ من الضّعیف حتّٰی اٰخذ الحق له ولا عندی اضعف من القویّ حتّی اٰخذ الحقّ منه'

"I swear by Allah that nobody is more forceful to me than a weak man until I cause his right to be given to him, and nobody is weaker than a powerful man till I obtain from him the right of the weak one."

Islamic equality, therefore, from the purely economic point of view means that everybody should have equal opportunities to earn livelihood, and Islam does not tolerate that a few wealthy persons should control and monopolize the sources of wealth whereas small traders should be unable to do business in the market place. By forbidding interest, speculative transactions, gambling, hoarding, monopolistic trade agreements, and by applying *zakāh, 'ushr, kharāj,* maintenance allowances, alms and other compulsory payments, an environment of freedom has been created in which every individual can get an opportunity of earning livelihood according to his ability, endeavor and investment. A prosperous society can be built upon this foundation. The differences in incomes which remain despite all this are actually unavoidable, and cannot be erased just as the differences in human beings in respect of beauty and elegance, health and vigor, sense and intelligence and offspring and progeny cannot be wiped out.

Verses 33 - 35

وَلَوْلَآ اَنْ يَّكُوْنَ النَّاسُ اُمَّةً وَّاحِدَةً لَّجَعَلْنَا لِمَنْ يَّكْفُرُ بِالرَّحْمٰنِ لِبُيُوْتِهِمْ سُقُفًا مِّنْ فِضَّةٍ وَّمَعَارِجَ عَلَيْهَا يَظْهَرُوْنَ ﴿٣٣﴾ وَلِبُيُوْتِهِمْ اَبْوَابًا وَّسُرُرًا عَلَيْهَا يَتَّكِـُٔوْنَ ﴿٣٤﴾ وَزُخْرُفًا ؕ وَاِنْ كُلُّ ذٰلِكَ لَمَّا

مَتَاعُ الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا ۭ وَالْاٰخِرَةُ عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ لِلْمُتَّقِيْنَ ﴿٣٥﴾

And were it not that all people will become of a single creed (i.e. disbelief), We will have caused, for the benefit of those who disbelieve in Raḥmān, roofs of their houses to be made of silver, and the stairs as well, on which they will climb, [33] **and doors of their homes, and the coaches on which they will recline,** [34] **and (will have made some of these things) of gold-ornaments. And all this is nothing but an enjoyment of the worldly life. And the Hereafter, with your Lord, is (destined) for the God-fearing.** [35]

Commentary

Superiority is not based upon wealth and property

This is the second reply to the infidels of Makkah for their question why prophethood was not bestowed upon some very rich and wealthy person of Makkah or Ṭā'if? The gist of the answer is that some qualities and abilities are undoubtedly necessary for choosing someone as a prophet. But abundance of riches and wealth cannot be taken as the basis of this choice. Wealth and property are so worthless in Allah's view that if there was no apprehension of all the people becoming disbelievers, He will have showered gold and silver upon all the infidels. The Holy Prophet ﷺ has stated, in a *ḥadīth* reported by Tirmidhī,

لو كانت الدّنيا تعدل عند الله جناح بعوضةٍ ماسقى كافرًا منها شربة مَاء

"If the worth of the whole world, in Allah's sight, had been equal to that of one wing of a mosquito, Allah Ta'ālā will not have given even one drop of water from this world to an infidel (kāfir)".

This tells us that neither abundance of wealth and property owned by someone can be a cause of his superiority, nor can one's poverty be taken as an indication of his being lower in rank. As for those excellent qualities which are necessary for prophethood, they are found in the Holy Prophet ﷺ, to their perfection. Their objection is, therefore, false and baseless.

The statement in these verses that if gold and silver had been showered upon all the infidels, all the people will have become disbelievers is meant for most of the people. Even today, there are people who are certain that if they become disbelievers, they will get abundance

of riches and wealth, but they do not lose their faith for the sake of wealth and property; such people will have remained steadfast to their belief and faith, perhaps even at that time, but the number of such people will have been very little indeed.

Verses 36 - 45

وَمَنْ يَّعْشُ عَنْ ذِكْرِ الرَّحْمٰنِ نُقَيِّضْ لَهٗ شَيْطٰنًا فَهُوَ لَهٗ قَرِيْنٌ ﴿٣٦﴾
وَاِنَّهُمْ لَيَصُدُّوْنَهُمْ عَنِ السَّبِيْلِ وَيَحْسَبُوْنَ اَنَّهُمْ مُّهْتَدُوْنَ ﴿٣٧﴾
حَتّٰٓى اِذَا جَآءَنَا قَالَ يٰلَيْتَ بَيْنِيْ وَبَيْنَكَ بُعْدَ الْمَشْرِقَيْنِ فَبِئْسَ
الْقَرِيْنُ ﴿٣٨﴾ وَلَنْ يَّنْفَعَكُمُ الْيَوْمَ اِذْ ظَّلَمْتُمْ اَنَّكُمْ فِى الْعَذَابِ
مُشْتَرِكُوْنَ ﴿٣٩﴾ اَفَاَنْتَ تُسْمِعُ الصُّمَّ اَوْ تَهْدِى الْعُمْىَ وَمَنْ كَانَ
فِىْ ضَلٰلٍ مُّبِيْنٍ ﴿٤٠﴾ فَاِمَّا نَذْهَبَنَّ بِكَ فَاِنَّا مِنْهُمْ مُّنْتَقِمُوْنَ ﴿٤١﴾
اَوْ نُرِيَنَّكَ الَّذِىْ وَعَدْنٰهُمْ فَاِنَّا عَلَيْهِمْ مُّقْتَدِرُوْنَ ﴿٤٢﴾ فَاسْتَمْسِكْ
بِالَّذِىْٓ اُوْحِىَ اِلَيْكَ ۚ اِنَّكَ عَلٰى صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيْمٍ ﴿٤٣﴾ وَاِنَّهٗ لَذِكْرٌ
لَّكَ وَلِقَوْمِكَ ۚ وَسَوْفَ تُسْئَلُوْنَ ﴿٤٤﴾ وَسْئَلْ مَنْ اَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ
مِنْ رُّسُلِنَآ اَجَعَلْنَا مِنْ دُوْنِ الرَّحْمٰنِ اٰلِهَةً يُّعْبَدُوْنَ ﴿٤٥﴾

And whoever makes himself blind against the advice of the *Raḥmān*, We assign for him a devil who accompanies him all the time. [36] And they (the devils) prevent such people from the (right) way, while they deem themselves to be on the right path, [37] until when such a person will come to us, he will say (to the devil), "Will that there were the distance of East and West between me and you, because you were the worst companion." [38] And (it will be said to such people,) 'Since you were wrongdoers, it will never benefit you today that you are sharing the punishment with each other.'[39] So, can you (O prophet) make the deaf to hear, or can you show the way to the blind and the one who is in open error? [40] So, even if We take you away, We will surely take vengeance on them. [41] Or (if) We show you (in your life) that (punishment) with which

We have threatened them, then We have full control over them. [42] **So, hold fast to that which has been revealed to you. Surely, you are on the straight path.** [43] **And certainly this (Qur'ān) is a word of honor for you and your people. And you will be questioned.** [44] **And ask Our messengers whom We sent before you whether We had appointed gods to be worshipped besides Raḥmān.** [45]

Commentary

وَمَنْ يَّعْشُ عَنْ ذِكْرِ الرَّحْمٰنِ (And whoever makes himself blind against the advice of the Raḥmān, We assign for him a devil who accompanies him all the time - 43:36) It means that whoever knowingly turns a blind eye towards Allah's advice i.e. the Holy Qur'ān and *waḥy*, Allah assigns to him a devil who accompanies him all the time in this world to prevent him from virtuous deeds, and to divert him towards evil. When such a man is resurrected in the Hereafter, his devil will also be with him, till they both are pushed in Hell. (Qurṭubī).

We learn from this that the punishment one gets even in this world for turning away from Allah's remembrance is that he gets into bad company and *'shaiṭāns'* (devils), whether from humans or from jinns, keep diverting him from virtues to vices. He commits vices but thinks that he is doing very well. (Qurṭubī). This devil who is assigned to such a person, as mentioned here, is in addition to the *'Shaiṭān'* (Satan) who is attached to every believer and disbeliever, because that *'shaiṭān'* (Satan) does leave the man alone at certain specific times, whereas this devil accompanies him all the time. (Bayān-ul-Qur'ān)

وَلَنْ يَّنْفَعَكُمُ الْيَوْمَ ('Since you were wrongdoers, it will never benefit you today that you are sharing the punishment with each other.'...43:39) There can be two explanations of this verse. One is that since your *'kufr'* and *'shirk'* (disbelief and ascribing partners to Allah) has been proved, your longing in the Hereafter in the words, "Will that this devil had been away from me," will be of no avail, because all of you will be sharing the same punishment.

The other explanation could be that after getting in Hell, your sharing the punishment with the devil will not benefit you. In this world, indeed it happens that when a few people share the same misfortune, everyone's burden of misery becomes somewhat lighter, but there in Hell,

everybody will be so terrorized that nobody will be able to lighten another's misery and hence sharing of the punishment will be of no benefit. (The translation given above is based on this interpretation.)

Good Fame is liked by Islam

وَإِنَّهٗ لَذِكْرٌ لَّكَ وَلِقَوْمِكَ (And certainly this Qur'ān is a word of honor for you and your people...43:44) The original word used in the text is *dhikr* which here means 'good name' or 'fame'. The verse means that the Noble Qur'ān is a matter of great honour and good fame for the Holy Prophet ﷺ and his people. Imām Rāzī has concluded from this verse that good fame is a desirable thing, because Allah Ta'ālā has stated this as a matter of favor and that is why Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام had supplicated:

وَاجْعَلْ لِّيْ لِسَانَ صِدْقٍ فِي الْاٰخِرِيْنَ

(And destine for me a truthful description among the next generations) (26:84)

But one must keep in mind that the good fame is praiseworthy only when it is received as an automatic result of virtuous deeds, but when virtuous deeds are done for the sake of good fame, then it becomes *riyā'* (ostentation) which not only nullifies all the rewards of good deeds, but also renders one guilty of a major sin.

In this verse the words 'your people' have been taken by some exegetes to mean the tribe of Quraish only, thereby proving the superiority of Quraish, whereas 'Allāmah Qurṭubī says that, according to the correct view, these words refer to the whole Ummah of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, irrespective of color or race, and the Noble Qur'ān is a matter of honor and good fame for the whole Ummah. (Qurṭubī)

وَسْئَلْ مَنْ اَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ مِنْ رُّسُلِنَا (And ask Our messengers whom We sent before you...43:45) A question may arise here: Since all the earlier prophets عليهم السلام had expired at the time of the revelation of this verse, how could the Holy Prophet ﷺ ask any question from his predecessors? Some exegetes have taken the verse in the sense that if, as a miracle, Allah Ta'ālā arranges for the Holy Prophet ﷺ to meet the earlier prophets عليهم السلام, then he should ask them about it. And it is well-established that the Holy Prophet ﷺ met all the preceding prophets عليهم السلام during the Night of Ascension. 'Allāmah Qurṭubī quotes some narrations according to which the Holy Prophet ﷺ asked them this very thing after

leading them in the prayers; but we could not discover the source of these narrations. Most exegetes have, therefore, explained that the verse does not mean to ask the prophets verbally. What is meant by the verse is to consult the divine Scriptures revealed to the earlier prophets, and to ask their learned scholars. And the scriptures of the prophets of Banī Isrā'īl which are available now, despite so many distortions, contain teachings about *'tauḥīd'* (Oneness of Allah) and condemnation of *'shirk'* (associating others with Allah) even today. For example, some excerpts from the Bible are quoted below:

Teachings about Oneness in the Scriptures of the earlier prophets

Here are two quotations from the Scriptures claimed by Jews and Christians to be the 'Pentateuch' or 'Torah' :-

> "The Lord has shown you this, to prove to you that he alone is God and that there is no other." (Deuteronomy, 4:35)

and

> "Israel, remember this! The Lord–and the Lord alone–is our God. Love the Lord your God with all your heart." (Deuteronomy, 6:4)

The scripture of Shi'yā عليه السلام (known as Isaiah) says,

> "I am the Lord; there is no other god. I will give you the strength you need, although you do not know me. I do this so that everyone from one end of the world to the other may know that I am the Lord and that there is no other god." (Isaiah, 45:5,6)

The books claimed by the Christians to be the Gospels contain this statement of Sayyidnā Masīḥ عليه السلام (Jesus Christ):

> "Listen, Israel! The Lord our God is the only Lord. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength." (Mark, 12:29, Matthew 22:36)

It is narrated that once Sayyidnā Masīḥ عليه السلام (Jesus Christ) said the following words during a supplication:

> "And eternal life means knowing you, the only true God, and knowing Jesus Christ, whom you sent." (Yuhanna 17:3)[1]

[1] These excerpts are taken from Good News Bible, Today's English Version, Published by the Bible Societies in 1976. (Muhammad Taqi Usmani)

Verses 46 - 56

وَلَقَدْ اَرْسَلْنَا مُوْسٰى بِاٰيٰتِنَآ اِلٰى فِرْعَوْنَ وَمَلَا۟ئِهٖ فَقَالَ اِنِّىْ رَسُوْلُ رَبِّ
الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿٤٦﴾ فَلَمَّا جَآءَهُمْ بِاٰيٰتِنَآ اِذَا هُمْ مِّنْهَا يَضْحَكُوْنَ ﴿٤٧﴾
وَمَا نُرِيْهِمْ مِّنْ اٰيَةٍ اِلَّا هِىَ اَكْبَرُ مِنْ اُخْتِهَا ۫ وَاَخَذْنٰهُمْ بِالْعَذَابِ
لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُوْنَ ﴿٤٨﴾ وَقَالُوْا يٰۤاَيُّهَ السّٰحِرُ ادْعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ بِمَا عَهِدَ
عِنْدَكَ ۚ اِنَّنَا لَمُهْتَدُوْنَ ﴿٤٩﴾ فَلَمَّا كَشَفْنَا عَنْهُمُ الْعَذَابَ اِذَا هُمْ
يَنْكُثُوْنَ ﴿٥٠﴾ وَنَادٰى فِرْعَوْنُ فِىْ قَوْمِهٖ قَالَ يٰقَوْمِ اَلَيْسَ لِىْ مُلْكُ
مِصْرَ وَهٰذِهِ الْاَنْهٰرُ تَجْرِىْ مِنْ تَحْتِىْ ۚ اَفَلَا تُبْصِرُوْنَ ﴿٥١﴾ اَمْ اَنَا
خَيْرٌ مِّنْ هٰذَا الَّذِىْ هُوَ مَهِيْنٌ ۙ وَّلَا يَكَادُ يُبِيْنُ ﴿٥٢﴾ فَلَوْلَآ اُلْقِىَ
عَلَيْهِ اَسْوِرَةٌ مِّنْ ذَهَبٍ اَوْ جَآءَ مَعَهُ الْمَلٰٓئِكَةُ مُقْتَرِنِيْنَ ﴿٥٣﴾
فَاسْتَخَفَّ قَوْمَهٗ فَاَطَاعُوْهُ ؕ اِنَّهُمْ كَانُوْا قَوْمًا فٰسِقِيْنَ ﴿٥٤﴾ فَلَمَّآ
اٰسَفُوْنَا انْتَقَمْنَا مِنْهُمْ فَاَغْرَقْنٰهُمْ اَجْمَعِيْنَ ﴿٥٥﴾ فَجَعَلْنٰهُمْ سَلَفًا
وَّمَثَلًا لِّلْاٰخِرِيْنَ ﴿٥٦﴾ ع

And We sent Mūsā with Our signs to Fir'aun (Pharaoh) and his chiefs; so he said, "I am the messenger of the Lord of the worlds." [46] So, when he came to them with Our signs, they at once started laughing at them. [47] And We did not show them a sign, but it used to be greater than its predecessor. And We seized them with punishment, so that they may return. [48] And they said, "O magician, pray for us to your Lord by the covenant He has made with you; we will certainly come to guidance." [49] Then, when We removed the punishment from them, they at once broke their word. [50] And Fir'aun proclaimed among his people, saying, "Does not the kingdom of Egypt belong to me? And these rivers are flowing right underneath me. Do you, then, not discern? [51] Or (do you not see that) I am much better than this one (Mūsā) who is worthless and can hardly express himself? [52] So why were the bracelets of gold not sent down to him, or (why) did the angels

not come along with him as companions?" [53] **Thus he made fool of his people, and they obeyed him. Surely they were a sinful people.** [54] **So, when they provoked Our anger, We took vengeance on them, and drowned them all together,** [55] **and made them a people of the past, and an example for the later generations.** [56]

Commentary

Incidents related to Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام have been stated by the Qur'ān at many places repeatedly, and the incidents referred to in the present verses have been described in detail in Sūrah Al-A'rāf. The reason for reminding these incidents here is to show that the objection of the infidels of Makkah that the Holy Prophet ﷺ is not a wealthy man is not a new objection; Fir'aun had expressed the same doubt against Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام and his prophethood. His contention was that being the ruler of Egypt, and owner of the palaces and rivers flowing beneath them, how could Mūsā عليه السلام claim to be a prophet against him. But just as Fir'aun's disbelief could be of no avail to him, and he got drowned along with his people, this objection of '*kuffār*' of Makkah, too, will not save them from the divine punishment in this world, or in the Hereafter.

وَلَا يَكَادُ يُبِينُ (and can hardly express himself - 43:52). Although as a result of his own supplication, the stammering of Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام had been removed by Allah Ta'ālā, Fir'aun remembered his previous state only, and hence this aspersion. And it is possible also that by saying this, Fir'aun did not mean stammering in speech, but he meant that Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام could not put forward adequate logical arguments to satisfy him, although this was nothing but a false accusation, because Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام had completely overwhelmed Fir'aun through his arguments and proofs against which he had no answer. (Tafsīr Kabīr and Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī).

فَاسْتَخَفَّ قَوْمَهُ (Thus he made fool of his people - 43:54). According to the Arabic expression, this sentence may be translated in two ways; the translation adopted in the text above is based on one of them. The second one may be: "He (Fir'aun) easily made his people to follow him". (Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī)

فَلَمَّآ اٰسَفُوْنَا (So, when they provoked our anger, - 43:55). Since Allah Almighty is pure of the states of anger and sorrow, the meaning is that their behavior caused Us to decide that they should be punished.

(Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī)

Verses 57 - 65

وَلَمَّا ضُرِبَ ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ مَثَلًا إِذَا قَوْمُكَ مِنْهُ يَصِدُّونَ ﴿٥٧﴾ وَقَالُوٓا
ءَ أٰلِهَتُنَا خَيْرٌ أَمْ هُوَ مَا ضَرَبُوهُ لَكَ إِلَّا جَدَلًا ط بَلْ هُمْ قَوْمٌ خَصِمُونَ
﴿٥٨﴾ إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا عَبْدٌ أَنْعَمْنَا عَلَيْهِ وَجَعَلْنٰهُ مَثَلًا لِّبَنِىٓ إِسْرَآءِيلَ ﴿٥٩﴾
وَلَوْ نَشَآءُ لَجَعَلْنَا مِنكُم مَّلٰٓئِكَةً فِى الْأَرْضِ يَخْلُفُونَ ﴿٦٠﴾ وَإِنَّهُ
لَعِلْمٌ لِّلسَّاعَةِ فَلَا تَمْتَرُنَّ بِهَا وَاتَّبِعُونِ ط هٰذَا صِرَاطٌ مُّسْتَقِيمٌ ﴿٦١﴾
وَلَا يَصُدَّنَّكُمُ الشَّيْطٰنُ ج إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُّبِينٌ ﴿٦٢﴾ وَلَمَّا جَآءَ
عِيسٰى بِالْبَيِّنٰتِ قَالَ قَدْ جِئْتُكُم بِالْحِكْمَةِ وَلِأُبَيِّنَ لَكُم بَعْضَ الَّذِى
تَخْتَلِفُونَ فِيهِ ج فَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ وَأَطِيعُونِ ﴿٦٣﴾ إِنَّ اللّٰهَ هُوَ رَبِّى وَرَبُّكُمْ
فَاعْبُدُوهُ ط هٰذَا صِرَاطٌ مُّسْتَقِيمٌ ﴿٦٤﴾ فَاخْتَلَفَ الْأَحْزَابُ مِنْ
بَيْنِهِمْ ج فَوَيْلٌ لِّلَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مِنْ عَذَابِ يَوْمٍ أَلِيمٍ ﴿٦٥﴾

And when the example of the son of Maryam was cited, your people started at once shouting at it (in joy), [57] and said, "Are Our gods better or is he?" And they did not cite it but for the sake of disputation. Rather, they are a quarrelsome people. [58] He ('Īsā) is no more than a slave (of Allah) whom We favored and made an example for the children of Isra'il. [59] And if We will, We may create angels from you who succeed you on the earth. [60] And he ('Īsā) is a source of knowledge of the Hour (the Day of Judgment); so do not be in doubt about it, and follow me. This is the straight way. [61] And let not the shaitan (Satan) prevent you (from following this way). He is surely an open enemy for you. [62] And when 'Īsā came with clear proofs, he said, "I have come to you with wisdom, and to explain to you some of those matters in which you differ. So, fear Allah, and obey me. [63] Surely, it is Allah who is my Lord and your Lord; so worship Him. This is the straight way." [64] Then different groups, out of them, fell into disagreement. So, woe to the wrongdoers

because of the punishment of a painful day. [65]

Commentary

وَلَمَّا ضُرِبَ ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ مَثَلًا اِذَا قَوْمُکَ مِنْهُ يَصِدُّوْنَ (And when the example of the son of Maryam was cited, your people started at once shouting at it [in joy]...43:57). Exegetes have narrated three events as background of the revelation of these verses. One is that once the Holy Prophet ﷺ had addressed the tribe of Quraish and said, "O people of Quraish! there is no good in whatever is worshipped beside Allah." The polytheists responded by saying, "The Christians worship Sayyidnā 'Īsā عليه السلام, although you yourself say that he was a virtuous slave of Allah, and His prophet." These verses were then revealed in reply to this objection (Qurṭubī).

The second narration is that the objection of the infidels related to the following verse of the Holy Qur'ān:

اِنَّكُمْ وَمَا تَعْبُدُوْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ حَصَبُ جَهَنَّمَ

"Surely, you and whatever you worship other than Allah are the fuel of Jahannam." (21:98)

When this verse was revealed, 'Abdullah Ibn-uz-ziba'ra claimed that he had the proper answer to this verse which was that the Christians worship Sayyidnā Masih ('Īsā عليه السلام) and Jews worship Sayyidnā 'Uzair عليه السلام, so will they both become fuel of Hell? Upon hearing this, the polytheists of Quraish became very joyful, and Allah then revealed the following verse of the Holy Qur'ān:

اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ سَبَقَتْ لَهُمْ مِّنَّا الْحُسْنٰى اُولٰٓئِکَ عَنْهَا مُبْعَدُوْنَ

"Surely, those for whom the good (news) from Us has come earlier shall be kept away from it." (21:101)

The above verses of Sūrah Zukhruf was also revealed in this context. (Ibn Kathīr, etc.,)

The third narration is that once the pagans of Makkah expressed the absurd thought that the Holy Prophet عليه السلام wanted to claim godhead for himself, so that he might be worshipped like Sayyidnā 'Īsā عليه السلام is worshipped by the Christians; these verses were revealed in that context.

In reality, there is no conflict between these three narrations. The infidels will have said all the three things, and in reply Allah Ta'ālā

revealed these verses in such a comprehensive manner that took care of all the three objections. The answer to the last objection is quite clear in these verses as to those who started worshipping Sayyidnā 'Īsā عليه السلام did not do so in obedience to any Divine command, nor had Sayyidnā 'Īsā عليه السلام ever desired it for himself, nor does the Qur'ān support it. Their misconception was based on the miraculous birth of Sayyidnā 'Īsā عليه السلام without a father which was, according to them, a sign of his being god or a son of God. The Holy Qur'ān has refuted this misconceived argument. How is it then possible that the Holy Prophet ﷺ will claim Godhead in imitation of the Christians?

The gist of the objection mentioned in the first and second narrations is essentially the same. The statement in the Qur'ān that all those who are worshipped except Allah will become fuel for Hell or the statement of the Holy Prophet ﷺ that there is no good in whatever is worshipped except Allah, refer to the lifeless objects of worship, such as idols or those living beings who directed their followers towards their own worship, or who liked to be worshipped, such as *shaiṭāns*, Fir'aun, Namrūd, etc.. So Sayyidnā 'Īsā عليه السلام is obviously not included in this category, since at no stage did he like to be worshipped. Christians do not worship him because of any direction having being given by Sayyidnā 'Īsā عليه السلام, rather they were misled and started worshipping him by deducing the wrong conclusion from his birth without a father which was a sample of Allah's power to show to the people that Allah does not need even any apparent cause or means to create something. This worship of Sayyidnā 'Īsā عليه السلام by Christians was not only irrational, but also against his own teachings, because he had always preached *'tauḥīd'* (Oneness of Allah); his own disgust against being worshipped simply does not allow his inclusion in the ranks of false gods.

وَلَوْ نَشَآءُ لَجَعَلْنَا مِنكُم مَّلَٰٓئِكَةً فِى الْاَرْضِ يَخْلُفُونَ (and if we will, We may create angels from you who succeed you on the earth...43:60) This is in reply to the gravely mistaken conclusion drawn by Christians from the miraculous birth of Sayyidnā 'Īsā عليه السلام without a father as a result of which they attributed godhead to him, and started worshipping him. Allah Ta'ālā states to controvert their argument that Sayyidnā 'Īsā's عليه السلام birth was merely a demonstration of His power, and He has the power to do even more supernatural things like creating Sayyidnā 'Ādam عليه السلام without

father and mother. And if He wills, He may do as unprecedented things as causing angels to be born out of human beings.

وَاِنَّهٗ لَعِلْمٌ لِّلسَّاعَةِ (And he ('Īsā عليه السلام) is a source of knowledge of the Hour [the day of judgement] - 43:61). This verse has been explained in two different ways. One is that Sayyidnā 'Īsā عليه السلام being born without a father is a proof to the fact that Allah Almighty can create people without apparent causes. Thus resurrecting the dead is not at all difficult for Him. But most exegetes have taken this verse in another sense. According to them it means that the descent of Sayyidnā 'Īsā عليه السلام from the sky is a sign of the Doomsday. And his coming to this world again in its last days and killing Dajjāl (the Antichrist) is proved by *mutawātir aḥādīth*. Some details on this subject have already been given in the explanation of the verse (3:54,55) of Sūrah 'Āl-'Imrān, (See V,2, pp.76 onward of this book) and in Sūrah Nisā' 3:54,55 (See V. 2, PP. 622 onward of this book) and some in Sūrah Al-Mā'idah (5:110). For more details one should refer to the author's book "التصريح بما تواتر فى نزول المسيح" *At-Taṣrīḥ bi mā tawātara fī nuzūl-il-Masīḥ* in Arabic and "مسیح موعود کی پہچان" *Masīḥ-e-Mau'ūd kī pehchān* in Urdu.

وَلِاُبَيِّنَ لَكُمْ بَعْضَ الَّذِىْ تَخْتَلِفُوْنَ فِيْهِ (and to explain to you some of those matters in which you differ...43:63) Since Banū Isrā'īl were drowned in arrogance and obstinacy, they had tampered with the Divine laws. Sayyidnā 'Īsā عليه السلام disclosed the reality of such distortions. The words 'some matters' are used because some other matters were purely of mundane nature. He might have not felt the need to deal with those differences. (Bayān-ul-Qur'ān).

Verses 66 - 77

هَلْ يَنْظُرُوْنَ اِلَّا السَّاعَةَ اَنْ تَاْتِيَهُمْ بَغْتَةً وَّهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُوْنَ ﴿٦٦﴾
اَلْاَخِلَّاءُ يَوْمَئِذٍ بَعْضُهُمْ لِبَعْضٍ عَدُوٌّ اِلَّا الْمُتَّقِيْنَ ﴿٦٧﴾ يٰعِبَادِ
لَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْكُمُ الْيَوْمَ وَلَآ اَنْتُمْ تَحْزَنُوْنَ ﴿٦٨﴾ اَلَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا بِاٰيٰتِنَا
وَكَانُوْا مُسْلِمِيْنَ ﴿٦٩﴾ اُدْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ اَنْتُمْ وَاَزْوَاجُكُمْ تُحْبَرُوْنَ
﴿٧٠﴾ يُطَافُ عَلَيْهِمْ بِصِحَافٍ مِّنْ ذَهَبٍ وَّاَكْوَابٍ وَفِيْهَا

مَاتَشْتَهِيْهِ الْاَنْفُسُ وَتَلَذُّ الْاَعْيُنُ ۚ وَاَنْتُمْ فِيْهَا خٰلِدُوْنَ ﴿۷۱﴾ وَتِلْكَ
الْجَنَّةُ الَّتِیْۤ اُوْرِثْتُمُوْهَا بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿۷۲﴾ لَكُمْ فِيْهَا فَاكِهَةٌ
كَثِيْرَةٌ مِّنْهَا تَاْكُلُوْنَ ﴿۷۳﴾ اِنَّ الْمُجْرِمِيْنَ فِیْ عَذَابِ جَهَنَّمَ خٰلِدُوْنَ
﴿۷۴﴾ لَايُفَتَّرُ عَنْهُمْ وَهُمْ فِيْهِ مُبْلِسُوْنَ ﴿۷۵﴾ وَمَا ظَلَمْنٰهُمْ وَلٰكِنْ
كَانُوْا هُمُ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿۷۶﴾ وَنَادَوْا يٰمٰلِكُ لِيَقْضِ عَلَيْنَا رَبُّكَ ؕ قَالَ
اِنَّكُمْ مّٰكِثُوْنَ ﴿۷۷﴾

They are waiting for nothing but for the Hour to come upon them suddenly, while they will not even imagine (it). [66] **Friends, on that day, will become enemies to one another, except the God-fearing,** [67] **(to whom it will be said) "O my slaves, there is no fear for you today, nor will you grieve–** [68]**–(that is, O) those (slaves) who believed in Our signs, and remained obedient.** [69]**–– Enter the Paradise, you and your spouses, showered with bliss."** [70] **Circulated among them will be the bowls of gold, and glasses. And therein will be whatever souls desire and that in which eyes delight. "And you will be living in it for ever.** [71] **And that is the Paradise that you are made to inherit because of what you used to do.** [72] **For you there are fruits in abundance from which you will eat."** [73] **The sinners (on the other hand) will be in the punishment of Jahannam, living there for ever.** [74] **It will not be lightened for them, and they will be there, devoid of all hopes.** [75] **And We did not do injustice to them, rather, they themselves were the unjust.** [76] **And they will call (Malik, the keeper of the hell,) "O Malik, let your Lord do away with us." He will say, " You have to stay on."** [77]

Commentary

The only real friendship is that which is in the sake of Allah

اَلْاَخِلَّاءُ يَوْمَئِذٍۢ بَعْضُهُمْ لِبَعْضٍ عَدُوٌّ اِلَّا الْمُتَّقِيْنَ (Friends, on that day, will become enemies to one another, except the God-fearing 43:67). This verse tells us plainly that the friendly relations in which we take so much pride in this world, and for which we don't even care about *ḥalāl* (permitted) and *ḥarām* (unlawful), will be of no use on the Day of judgment, rather they will turn into enmity. In this connection, Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Kathīr has reproduced

a discourse of Sayyidnā 'Alī ﷺ narrated by 'Abdur Razzāq in his Muṣannaf and by Ibn Abī Ḥātim regarding two Muslim friends and two Non-Muslim friends. One of the Muslim friends died and when he was given the glad tidings of Paradise, he recollected his friend and supplicated in his favour: "O Allah! That friend of mine used to advise me to obey You and to obey the Holy Prophet ﷺ, he used to direct me towards virtues and to prevent me from vices, and kept on reminding me that one day I would have to meet You. So O Allah! Do not misguide him after me, so that he may also see the scenes of Paradise as You have shown to me, and be pleased with him, as you have been with me." In reply, it will be said to him, "Do not worry, if you know what reward I have stored for your friend, you will weep less and laugh more." Later, when the friend will also have died, both the souls will get together and Allah Ta'ālā will direct them that each one of them should praise the other. Thereupon, each one of them will say about the other that he is the best brother, best companion and the best friend.

As against this, when one of the Non-Muslim friends will die, and he will be told that he will go to Hell, he will recollect his friend and will supplicate thus "O Allah! That friend of mine used to insist upon me to disobey You and your messenger, used to direct me towards vices and used to prevent me from virtues and used to tell me that I would never meet You. So O Allah! Do not give him guidance after me, so that he may also see the scenes of Hell, as You have shown to me, and be displeased with him just as You have been displeased with me." Later, when the other friend will also have died, both their souls will be get together, and they will be directed to praise the other. Then each one of them will say about the other, "He is the worst brother, worst companion and worst friend. (Ibn Kathīr p. 134, v.4)

Therefore the best friendship, in respect of this world as well as the Hereafter, is the one that is for the sake of Allah. Many are the merits stated in '*aḥādīth*' for those two Muslims who love each other purely for the sake of Allah. One of these merits is that they will be in the shade of the "'Arsh" (Throne) of Allah. And 'love for the sake of Allah' means to love someone because he is a true follower of the religion prescribed by Allah. As such, it includes sincere love for teachers of religious subjects, spiritual guides, reformers, religious scholars and devotees of Allah, as

well as for all the Muslims.

Verses 78 -89

لَقَدْ جِئْنٰكُمْ بِالْحَقِّ وَلٰكِنَّ اَكْثَرَكُمْ لِلْحَقِّ كٰرِهُوْنَ ﴿٧٨﴾ اَمْ اَبْرَمُوْٓا
اَمْرًا فَاِنَّا مُبْرِمُوْنَ ﴿٧٩﴾ اَمْ يَحْسَبُوْنَ اَنَّا لَانَسْمَعُ سِرَّهُمْ وَنَجْوٰىهُمْ ؕ
بَلٰى وَرُسُلُنَا لَدَيْهِمْ يَكْتُبُوْنَ ﴿٨٠﴾ قُلْ اِنْ كَانَ لِلرَّحْمٰنِ وَلَدٌ ۖ فَاَنَا
اَوَّلُ الْعٰبِدِيْنَ ﴿٨١﴾ سُبْحٰنَ رَبِّ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ رَبِّ الْعَرْشِ
عَمَّا يَصِفُوْنَ ﴿٨٢﴾ فَذَرْهُمْ يَخُوْضُوْا وَيَلْعَبُوْا حَتّٰى يُلٰقُوْا يَوْمَهُمُ
الَّذِىْ يُوْعَدُوْنَ ﴿٨٣﴾ وَهُوَ الَّذِىْ فِى السَّمَآءِ اِلٰهٌ وَّفِى الْاَرْضِ اِلٰهٌ ؕ
وَهُوَ الْحَكِيْمُ الْعَلِيْمُ ﴿٨٤﴾ وَتَبٰرَكَ الَّذِىْ لَهٗ مُلْكُ السَّمٰوٰتِ
وَالْاَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا ۚ وَعِنْدَهٗ عِلْمُ السَّاعَةِ ۚ وَاِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُوْنَ ﴿٨٥﴾
وَلَا يَمْلِكُ الَّذِيْنَ يَدْعُوْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِهِ الشَّفَاعَةَ اِلَّا مَنْ شَهِدَ بِالْحَقِّ
وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٨٦﴾ وَلَئِنْ سَاَلْتَهُمْ مَّنْ خَلَقَهُمْ لَيَقُوْلُنَّ اللّٰهُ فَاَنّٰى
يُؤْفَكُوْنَ ﴿٨٧﴾ وَقِيْلِهٖ يٰرَبِّ اِنَّ هٰٓؤُلَآءِ قَوْمٌ لَّا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿٨٨﴾ فَاصْفَحْ
عَنْهُمْ وَقُلْ سَلٰمٌ ؕ فَسَوْفَ يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٨٩﴾

Indeed We have brought to you the truth, but it is the truth that most of you detest. [78] Is it that they have firmly resolved to do something (harmful to Our messenger)? Then, We have firmly resolved (to frustrate their plan.) [79] Do they think that We do not hear their secrets and their whispers? Why not? And Our messengers (angels) are with them who record. [80] Say, "Had there been a son for the *Raḥmān,* I would have been the first to worship." [81] Pure is the Lord of the heavens and the earth, the Lord of the Throne, from what they describe (about Him). [82] So, let them indulge (in their fallacy) and play, until they face their Day that they are promised. [83] And He is the One who is God to be worshipped in the sky, and God to be worshipped on the earth. And He is the Wise, the

All-Knowing. [84] And Glorious is the One to whom belongs the kingdom of the heavens and the earth and whatever lies between them. And with Him is the knowledge of the Hour; and towards Him you are to be returned. [85] And those whom they invoke besides Him have no power to intercede, but those who bear witness to the truth, while they have knowledge (may intercede for the believers with Allah's permission). [86] And if you ask them as to who has created them, they will certainly say, "Allah". Then, to where are they driven back (by their false desires)? [87] And (Allah has the knowledge) of his (prophet's) saying, "O my Lord, these are a people who do not believe." [88] [1] So, turn away from them, and say, "Salām!" (good-bye!). Then, soon they will come to know. [89]

Commentary

قُلْ اِنْ كَانَ لِلرَّحْمٰنِ وَلَدٌ فَاَنَا اَوَّلُ الْعٰبِدِيْنَ (Had there been a son for the *Raḥmān*, I would have been the first to worship - 43:81) It does not mean that, God forbid, there is any possibility of *Raḥmān* (Allah) having offspring. What is really being said is that the Holy Prophet ﷺ is not denying your beliefs due to enmity or obstinacy, but because they are illogical. If precise logical arguments could prove the existence of offspring of Allah, he would certainly have accepted it. But every intellectual argument contradicts this possibility, and therefore there is no question of accepting it. This tells us that it is lawful, rather desirable, to declare during a debate with erring people that if their claim had been proved by strong arguments, it would have been accepted, because such a manner of speech may sometimes soften the heart of the opponent and may persuade him to accept the truth.

وَقِيْلِهٖ يٰرَبِّ اِنَّ هٰٓؤُلَآءِ قَوْمٌ لَّا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ (And [Allah has the knowledge] of His prophet's saying, "O my Lord, these are a people who do not believe." 43:88) The point made by this sentence is that there are very serious reasons for Allah's wrath descending upon these infidels. On the one

(1) This translation is based on the construction adopted by many exegetes, including Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thanawi رحمه الله تعالیٰ. However, according to Imām Rāzī, the translation will be as follows, " And (remember the time) of his (Prophet's) saying....." This rendering seems to be closer to the text in view of the grammatical construction of the verse. (For details, please see At-tafsīr-ul-kabīr, by Imām Rāzī v.27, p.234) (Muhammad Taqi Usmani)

hand, there are their severe crimes themselves, and on the other when the Messenger ﷺ, who has been sent as a "blessing for the world" and "interceder for the sinners", himself complains against them and says that these people do not believe, despite repeated good counsels given to them, it indicates that they must have agonized the Holy Prophet ﷺ to an extreme extent, otherwise "the blessing for the worlds" would not have made such a plaint merely on an ordinary hurt.

It should be noted that the present verse has been construed in different ways. The above translation is based on the construction adopted by Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thanawi رحمه الله تعالى. Various other constructions are given in Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī.

وَقُلْ سَلَامٌ (and say, Salām [good-bye]. Then soon they will come to know---43:89). At the end of the Sūrah, the same advice has been given to the Holy Prophet ﷺ that is always given to every preacher of truth. The gist of the advice is that one may reply to the arguments and doubts of the opponents, but when they start talking ignorantly, foolishly or are involved in hurling abuses, then instead of replying in their language, one should keep quiet. And the instruction to say Salām does not mean that *"Assalāmu 'alaikum"* is to be said to them, because this salutation is not permissible for any non-Muslim; rather it is an idiomatic expression for parting of ways. As such, the view of those who deduce from this verse that saying *"Assalāmu 'alaikum"* to non-Muslims is permissible does not carry much weight. (Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī).

Alḥamdulillāh
The Commentary on
Sūrah Az-Zukhruf (The Gold)
Ends here

Sūrah Ad-Dukhān

The Smoke

Sūrah Ad-Dukhān is Makkī. It has 59 Verses and 3 Sections

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 9

حٰمٓ ﴿١﴾ وَالْكِتٰبِ الْمُبِيْنِ ﴿٢﴾ اِنَّآ اَنْزَلْنٰهُ فِىْ لَيْلَةٍ مُّبٰرَكَةٍ اِنَّا كُنَّا
مُنْذِرِيْنَ ﴿٣﴾ فِيْهَا يُفْرَقُ كُلُّ اَمْرٍ حَكِيْمٍ ﴿٤﴾ اَمْرًا مِّنْ عِنْدِنَا ؕ اِنَّا كُنَّا
مُرْسِلِيْنَ ﴿٥﴾ رَحْمَةً مِّنْ رَّبِّكَ ؕ اِنَّهٗ هُوَ السَّمِيْعُ الْعَلِيْمُ ﴿٦﴾ رَبِّ
السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا ۘ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُّوْقِنِيْنَ ﴿٧﴾ لَآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا
هُوَ يُحْيٖ وَيُمِيْتُ ؕ رَبُّكُمْ وَرَبُّ اٰبَآئِكُمُ الْاَوَّلِيْنَ ﴿٨﴾ بَلْ هُمْ فِىْ
شَكٍّ يَّلْعَبُوْنَ ﴿٩﴾

Ḥā Mīm. [1] By the manifest Book, [2] We have sent it down in a blessed night, (because) We had to warn (people). [3] In that (night), every wise thing is decided [4] through a command from Us. We were to send the Messenger [5] as a mercy from your Lord, – Surely, He is the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing – [6] the Lord of the heavens and the earth and of whatever there is between them, if you are to believe. [7] There is no god, but He. He gives life and brings death. He is your Lord and the Lord of your forefathers. [8] But they, being in doubt, are playing around. [9]

Commentary

The Merit of the Sūrah

Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ﷺ reports that the Messenger of Allah said that whoever recites Sūrah Dukhān on Friday night, his sins will have been forgiven by the morning. Sayyidnā Umāmah ﷺ narrates that the Messenger of Allah said anyone who recites Sūrah Dukhān on Friday, in the night or in the day, Allah will build for him a house in Paradise. (Qurṭubī on the authority of Tha'labī).

In the present set of verses, the greatness of Qur'ān and some of its special features are described. وَالْكِتَابِ الْمُبِيْنِ "By the manifest Book". This verse refers to the Holy 'Qur'ān'. In the verse Allah swears an oath by the magnificent Qur'ān to state that it was revealed in a blessed and auspicious Night, the purpose of which is to awaken the unmindful human beings from their deep slumber. A similar oath was taken, in exactly the same words, at the commencement of Sūrah Az-Zukhruf (Chapter 43). The oath-phrase has been fully discussed there.

لَيْلَةٍ مُّبٰرَكَةٍ 'blessed night', in verse 2 according to majority of the Commentators, refers to *'laylatul Qadr'* or the 'Night of Power' which occurs in the last ten nights of the month of Ramaḍān. During this night Allah sends down countless blessings for his slaves/servants. It has been explicitly mentioned in Sūrah Al-Qadr, thus:

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنٰهُ فِيْ لَيْلَةِ الْقَدْرِ

"We sent it (the Qur'ān) down in the Night of *Qadr*". (97:1)

This clearly indicates that the phrase *'laylah mubārakah'* (blessed night) occurring in the verse refers to the 'Night of Power'. It is narrated in a Tradition of the Prophet ﷺ that all Prophets عليهم السلام, since the inception of man till the end, received their respective Books in the month of Ramaḍān on different dates. Sayyidnā Qatādah ﷺ reports on the authority of Sayyidnā Wāthilah ﷺ that the Messenger of Allah said that Prophet Ibrāhīm عليه السلام received his Scriptures on 1st Ramaḍān, Torah was revealed on 6th Ramaḍān, Zabūr was revealed on 12th Ramaḍān, Injīl was revealed on 18th Ramaḍān and the Holy Qur'ān was revealed on the night of 24th, that is , on 25th Ramaḍān . (Qurṭubī).

The statement that the 'Qur'ān was revealed in the Night of Power'

means that it was revealed in its entirety from the Preserved Tablet to the lowest Firmament in one night of the month of Ramaḍān. But, it was revealed to the Prophet ﷺ gradually over a period of twenty-three years . Some scholars have expressed the opinion that the installment of the Qur'ān that was destined to be revealed in a given year used to be sent down on the Night of Power from the Preserved Tablet to the Firmament of the Earth. (Qurṭubī).

Some other scholars of Tafsīr, like 'Ikrimah, interpret the phrase *'laylah mubārakah'* (blessed night) as referring to *'laylat-ul-bara'ah'* (the Night of Immunity), that is, the 15th night of Sha'bān. But to say that the Qur'ān was revealed during this night goes against the clear texts of the Qur'ān: In شَهْرُ رَمَضَانَ الَّذِیْٓ اُنْزِلَ فِیْهِ الْقُرْاٰنُ and in اِنَّآ اَنْزَلْنٰهُ فِیْ لَیْلَةِ الْقَدْرِ we come across "The month of Ramaḍān is the one in which the Qur'ān was revealed...(2:185)" and "We have sent it (the Qur'ān) in the Night of *Qadr* - (97:1)". In the presence of such clear texts, it cannot be accepted, without any strong evidence, that the Qur'ān was revealed in the Night of Immunity. There are, however, certain Traditions that speak highly of this night - that it is a night of blessings and that it is a night during which Allah showers His mercy. Some versions of the Tradition use exactly the same words as the Qur'ān uses in the verse to describe *'laylah mubārakah'* - فِیْهَا یُفْرَقُ كُلُّ اَمْرٍ حَكِیْمٍ اَمْرًا مِّنْ عِنْدِنَا "In that (night), every wise thing is decided (4) through a command from Us...(5)". In interpreting this verse Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضی اللہ عنہ says that it refers to the Night of Power, in which the Qur'ān was revealed. In it all matters are decreed to happen from the present Night of Power to the next, relating to all creation, their births, their deaths, their provisions and other details. Other leading authorities on Tafsīr, like Sayyidnā Ḥasan, Qatādah, Mujāhid and others رضی اللہ عنہم, concur with Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضی اللہ عنہ. Mahdawī says that all matters decreed by Allah are, on this night, transferred to the angelic scribes who record the decrees of the coming year. Other texts of Qur'ān and Suunah bear testimony to the fact that Allah had decreed all matters in pre-eternity (*azal*) even before the creation of man. Therefore, the statement that man's destiny is decreed in this night simply means that the decrees for the whole year are handed over, in this night, to the relevant angels for implementation. (Qurṭubī).

Because some versions of the Tradition state that births, deaths and

sustenance are decreed in the night of immunity or 15th night of Sha'ban, some of the scholars have interpreted the phrase *'laylah mubārakah'* in the current verse as referring to *'laylat-ul-barā'ah'* or 'the Night of Immunity'. But this is not correct, because here the revelation of the Qur'ān is mentioned first; and its revelation in the month of Ramaḍān is confirmed by the clear texts of the Qur'ān. Some versions state that sustenance and other things are decreed in the Night of Immunity. Ibn Kathīr, first of all, says this Tradition is *mursal* and such Tradition cannot be reliable in the presence of clear/express texts. Qāḍī Abū Bakr Ibn 'Arabi asserts that no authentic Tradition relating to mid-Sha'bān is available which may show that sustenance, births and deaths are determined and decreed in that night. He further rejects the idea that there is any reliable Tradition on the merit of this night. Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī, however, cites a Tradition, without a chain of transmitters, narrated by Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ in which he says that sustenance, life and death are determined in the mid-Sha'bān night, and in the Night of Power the decrees are handed over to the angels. If this Tradition is confirmed, then the two interpretations can be reconciled and synchronized. Otherwise, the express words of Qur'ān and authentic Traditions relating to *'laylah mubārakah'* and *'fīhā yufraqu...'* in the verse of Sūrah Dukhān فِيهَا يُفْرَقُ clearly show that they refer to the 'Night of Power'. As far as the merit of the night of mid-Sha'bān is concerned, it is a separate issue. Some Traditions do speak about it but they are weak. Therefore, Qāḍī Abū Bakr Ibn 'Arabi denied any merit of this night. Chains of transmission of Traditions concerning mid-Sha'bān are all weak but, it may be suggested that, if the various ways of transmission are put together, they gain strength. Therefore, many great scholars have accepted the Traditions about mid-Sha'ban because there is room to act upon weak Traditions relating to meritorious actions. Allah knows best!

Verses 10 - 16

فَارْتَقِبْ يَوْمَ تَأْتِي السَّمَآءُ بِدُخَانٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿١٠﴾ يَّغْشَى النَّاسَ ۖ هٰذَا
عَذَابٌ اَلِيْمٌ ﴿١١﴾ رَبَّنَا اكْشِفْ عَنَّا الْعَذَابَ اِنَّا مُؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿١٢﴾ اَنّٰى
لَهُمُ الذِّكْرٰى وَقَدْ جَآءَهُمْ رَسُوْلٌ مُّبِيْنٌ ﴿١٣﴾ ثُمَّ تَوَلَّوْا عَنْهُ وَقَالُوْا

مُعَلَّمٌ مَّجْنُونٌ ﴿١٤﴾ اِنَّا كَاشِفُوا الْعَذَابِ قَلِيْلاً اِنَّكُمْ عَآئِدُوْنَ ﴿١٥﴾
يَوْمَ نَبْطِشُ الْبَطْشَةَ الْكُبْرٰى ج اِنَّا مُنْتَقِمُوْنَ ﴿١٦﴾

So, wait for a day when the sky will come up with a visible smoke [10] that will envelop people. This is a painful punishment. [11] (Then they will say,) " O our Lord, remove from us the punishment; we will truly believe." [12] How will they take lesson, while there has already come to them a messenger making things clear, [13] then they turned away from him, and said, " (He is) tutored, crazy."? [14] (Well,) We are going to remove the punishment for a while, (but) you will certainly go back *(to your original position)*. [15] (Then,) the day We will seize (you) with the greatest seizure, We will take vengeance. [16]

Commentary

دُخَانٌ مُّبِيْنٌ "...visible smoke" in verse (10) embodies a prophecy and the Prophet ﷺ was asked to watch for the Day when the sky will bring forth a manifest smoke covering the people. There are three opinions recorded about this from the Companions and their pupils.

The first view is that the smoke is one of the portents of the Day of Judgement which will occur very close to the Day of Judgement. This view is held by Sayyidnā 'Alī al-Murtaḍā, Ibn 'Abbās, Ibn 'Umar, Abū Hurairah, Zaid Ibn 'Alī ﷺ, Ḥasan al-Baṣrī Ibn Abī Mulaikah and others رحمهم الله تعالى. This view is recorded traceably on the authority of Sayyidnā Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī and Ḥudhaifah Ibn 'Usaid al-Ghifārī رحمهم الله تعالى which will be set out in detail later.

The second view is that this prophecy has already occurred. This refers to the event when the Quraish did not respond to Islam's call and they grew obstinate, the Apostle of Allah invoked against them that they would suffer seven years of drought and famine as it happened in the time of Prophet Yūsuf ﷺ. They became so exhausted and hungry that they were forced to eat bones and carrion. When they looked at the sky, they saw nothing but smoke or smoky haze because of their exhaustion, instead of rain-laiden clouds. This view is held by Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd ﷺ and others.

The third view is held by Sayyidnā 'Abdur-Raḥmān al-'A'raj and others. They say that the 'smoke' refers to the 'dust' which had been stirred up to the sky, and had covered the firmament of Makkah on the day of 'the Conquest of Makkah'. (Qurṭubī).

The first two views are most popular. Ibn Kathīr says regarding the third view:

هذا القول غريب جدًا بل مُنكر

"This view is *gharīb* (unfamiliar), in fact *munkar* (against authentic reports)".

The other two views are confirmed by authentic Traditions. Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī supports the second view. Tafsīr Bayān-ul-Qur'ān prefers this view. It would appear that Ibn Kathīr and Qurṭubī prefer the first view. Allah knows best!

Narrations relating to the two views are as follows. It is recorded in Ṣaḥīḥ of Muslim that Sayyidnā Ḥudhaifah Ibn 'Usaid al-Ghifārī ﵁ said: "The Messenger of Allah looked out upon us from a room while we were discussing the Hour. He said:

'The Hour will not come until you see ten signs. The rising of the sun from the west; the smoke; the beast (*dābbat-ul-'arḍ*); the emergence of Gog and Magog; the appearance of 'Īsā son of Maryam; the Dajjāl (anti-Christ); three cases of the earth collapsing - one in the east, one in the west, and one in the Arabian peninsula; and a fire that will emerge from the bottom of Aden and will drive the people - or gather the people - stopping with them when they stop to sleep at night or rest during the day.'" (Ibn Kathīr).

Ibn Jarīr has recorded on the authority of Sayyidnā Abū Mālik Ash'arī ﵁ that the Messenger of Allah said: "I warn you against three things: one, the smoke which will only cause cold in a believer, but will permeate the entire body of an unbeliever so much so that it will ooze out from every pore and minute hole of the skin; the second thing is the beast (of the earth which will be of a strange/unusual type); the third thing will be Dajjāl". Having cited this narration, Ibn Kathīr said: هذا اسناد جيّد "This chain of transmitters is good". Ibn Kathīr has cited another narration on the same subject vide Ibn Abī Ḥātim on the authority of Sayyidnā Abū

Sa'īd al-Khudrī. He also cites a narration with reference to Ibn Abī Ḥātim on the authority of Sayyidnā 'Alī al-Murtaḍā ﵁ to the following effect: "This prophecy has not yet been fulfilled. (It will happen close to the Hour). This smoke will be the cause of catarrh for the believer but it will penetrate the entire body of an unbeliever and ooze out of the tiny holes of his skin". Ibn Jarīr cites a narration on the same subject on the authority of Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Umar and Ibn 'Abbās ﵄. Ibn Kathīr cites this and writes:

> هذا اسناد صحيح الى ابن عباسؓ حبرالامة وترجمان القران وهكذا قول من وافقه من الصّحابة والتابعينؒ مع الاحاديث المرفوعه من الصحاح والحسان وغيرهما الّتى اوردوها مما فيه مقنع ودلالة ظاهرة على ان الدّخان من الايات المنتظرة مع انّه ظاهر القران (فَارْتَقِبْ يَوْمَ تَأْتِي السَّمَاءُ بِدُخَانٍ مُّبِيْنٍ) وعلى ما فسره ابن مسعود انما هو خيال رأوه فى اعينهم من شدّة الجوع والجهد و هكذا قوله تعالىٰ (يَغْشَى النَّاسَ) او يتغشاهم ويعمهم ولوكان امرًا خياليا يخص اهل مكة المشركين لما قيل فيه يغشى الناس.
>
> "This chain of transmitters is authentic up to Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﵄, the scholar of the Ummah, interpreter of the Qur'ān. This is the view of other Companions and their pupils who concur with Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﵄, together with prophetic Traditions - some being *sahih* and others *ḥasan*. They too are sufficient to prove that the 'smoke' is one of the portents of the Hour. It has not yet occurred, especially since the apparent wordings of the Qur'ān bear evidence to this fact. Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd's ﵁ popular interpretation of the word 'smoke' refers to an imaginary smoke/an illusion which they saw because of their intense hunger and exhaustion, but it is inconceivable that the Qur'ān would use a phrase like يغشى الناس 'that will envelop people ...(11)' because this imaginary smoke was experienced by Makkans only. The wordings of the phrase 'that will envelop people ...(11)" show that the smoke had enveloped all the people.

Earlier on, Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd's ﵁ view was given as follows as recorded in the two Ṣaḥīḥs, Musnad of Aḥmad, Tirmidhī, Nasa'ī and others. Sayyidnā Masrūq ﵀ narrates: 'We entered the mosque of Kūfah at the gates of kindah - and a preacher recited the verse يَوْمَ تَأْتِي السَّمَآءُ بِدُخَانٍ مُّبِيْنٍ "a day when the sky will come up with a visible smoke

(44:10)" and asked the audience : "Do you know what smoke is that ?" Then he said that that is the smoke which will emerge on the Day of Resurrection. It will take away the hearing and sight of the hypocrites, but for the believers it will be like having a cold. Sayyidnā Masrūq ﷺ says, 'when we heard this we went to Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd ﷺ and told him about it. He was lying down, and he sat up with a start and said: "Allah has given to his prophet the following direction: قُلْ مَآ اَسْـَٔلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ اَجْرٍ وَّمَآ اَنَا مِنَ الْمُتَكَلِّفِيْنَ Say, "I do not demand from you any fee for it, nor am I from among those who make up things artificially" (38:86). This verse proves that it is also a part of knowledge that when a man does not know something, he should say frankly that he does not know and that the correct knowledge is with Allah.(and he should not pretend that he knows it) "Then he narrated a Ḥadīth which interprets the meaning of the verse, thus: When the Quraish did not respond to the call of Islam and grew stubborn, the Messenger of Allah imprecated against them that they should have years like the years of drought and famine during the time of Sayyidnā Yūsuf عليه السلام. They became so exhausted and hungry that they ate dead meat and bones. When they looked at the sky, they saw nothing but smoke.

According to another report, a man would look at the sky and he would see nothing between him and the sky except a smoky haze on account of intensity of hunger and exhaustion. In support of his argument he recited فَارْتَقِبْ يَوْمَ تَاْتِى السَّمَآءُ بِدُخَانٍ مُّبِيْنٍ "So, wait for a day when the sky will come up with a visible smoke (44:10)". When this event took place, people came up to the Prophet of Allah and requested him to pray to Allah to send down rain to his tribe of Mudar. Otherwise, they all will perish. So, the Holy Prophet ﷺ prayed for rain for them, and the rain came down. On that occasion the following verse was revealed اِنَّا كَاشِفُوا الْعَذَابِ قَلِيْلًا اِنَّكُمْ عَآئِدُوْنَ "We are going to remove the punishment for a while, (but) you will certainly go back (to your original position). (44:15)" As predicted, when they were granted ease or reprieve, they reverted to their former state of *kufr* (disbelief) and Allah revealed the following verse يَوْمَ نَبْطِشُ الْبَطْشَةَ الْكُبْرٰى ۚ اِنَّا مُنْتَقِمُوْنَ "(Then,) the day We will seize (you) with the greatest seizure, We will take vengeance. (44:16)"

Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd ﷺ says that بطشہ کبریٰ "greatest seizure" refers to the battle of Badr. After reporting this incident,

Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd ﷺ says that five events have already taken place:

(1) the smoke;
(2) the (defeat of the) Romans;
(3) the (splitting of the) moon;
(4) the seizure; and
(5) the *lizām*. (Ibn Kathīr).

The 'smoke', according to this interpretation, refers to the drought and famine in Makkah. The defeat of the Romans was prophesied in the Sūrah Ar-Rūm, thus: وَهُم مِّنْ بَعْدِ غَلَبِهِمْ سَيَغْلِبُونَ "and they, after their defeat, will be victorious." (30:3) The splitting of the moon refers to the miracle given by Allah to Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ that is described in Sūrah Al-Qamar, thus: اِقْتَرَبَتِ السَّاعَةُ وَانْشَقَّ الْقَمَرُ "The Hour (of doom) has drawn near, and the moon has split asunder (54:1)". The 'seizure', according to this interpretation, refers to the consequences of the pagan Quraish in the Battle of Badr. The *'lizām'* refers to فَسَوْفَ يَكُوْنُ لِزَامًا "Now since you belied (the truth), the punishment will be inseparable from you (25:77)", meaning the unbelievers' persistent denial of the truth will inevitably cause them torment.

A careful analysis of the verses embody several prophecies. First, the appearance of smoke on the sky and enveloping all the people. Second, that the pagans will not be able to bear the torment, so they will pray to Allah for its removal promising that they will believe. Third, they will go back on their words and break their promise. Fourth, Allah - despite their false promise - will remove the punishment for a short while in order to establish an argument against them, showing that they will not keep to their promise. Fourth, He will launch the greatest assault on them again to take revenge. According to Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd's ﷺ interpretation, all the prophecies have been fulfilled. The first four prophecies were fulfilled during the period when the people of Makkah suffered a severe drought and famine until this torment was lifted. The fifth one was fulfilled on the occasion of the battle of Badr. But the difficulty in this interpretation is that it seems inconceivable that the express wordings of the Qur'ān such as تَأْتِي السَّمَآءُ "...the sky will come دُخَانٍ مُّبِيْنٍ a visible smoke (10) يَغْشَى النَّاسَ will envelop people ... (11)" would refer

to an imaginary smoke on account of intensity of hunger. The wordings expressly refer to the distinctive smoke that would be brought forth in the open and clear sky, enshrouding all the people. But in this interpretation, there is neither visible smoke in the sky nor is it enveloping the people. The smoke was as a result of the intensity of their own exhaustion. Therefore, following the express wordings of the Qur'ān, Ibn Kathīr prefers to interpret the expression دُخَانٍ مُّبِينٍ "visible smoke" as referring to one of the signs/portents of the Hour. Furthermore, this interpretation is preferable because this is based on Prophetic *aḥādīth*, while the other interpretation is based merely on a saying of Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd رضي الله عنه.

But a strong objection on the interpretation of Ibn Kathīr may be raised on the basis of the verse that says, إِنَّا كَاشِفُوا الْعَذَابِ قَلِيلًا إِنَّكُمْ عَائِدُونَ "(Well,) We are going to remove the punishment for a while, (but) you will certainly go back (to your original position). (44:15)". The problem here is that on the Day of Judgement no punishment of the unbelievers will be removed. The assertion that their punishment will be removed for a few days does not appear to coincide with the interpretation that takes the 'smoke' as a sign of Qiyāmah. Responding to this objection, Ibn Kathīr has observed that it could have one of two meanings. For one thing, it could mean 'If We, in keeping with your request, grant you reprieve from your torment and send you back to the world, you will revert to your former state of *kufr*'. This may be compared to another verse on the same subject: وَلَوْ رَحِمْنَاهُمْ وَكَشَفْنَا مَا بِهِم مِّن ضُرٍّ لَّلَجُّوا فِي طُغْيَانِهِمْ يَعْمَهُونَ "And even if We have mercy on them and remove whatever distress they have, they would still persist obstinately in their rebellion, wandering blindly (23:75)". Similarly, another verse وَلَوْ رُدُّوا لَعَادُوا لِمَا نُهُوا عَنْهُ "...And if they were sent back, they would again go for what they were forbidden from...". (6:28)

The other meaning of كَاشِفُوا الْعَذَابِ "We are going to remove the punishment" could be that all the causes of punishment have been completed and the punishment is imminent, but it is postponed for a few days, as it was delayed in the case of the people of Yūnus عليه السلام The Qur'ān says كَشَفْنَا عَنْهُمُ الْعَذَابَ "Surely We have removed from them their punishment" whereas the punishment on the people of Yūnus عليه السلام had not yet arrived - only the signs of punishment were visible when it was

delayed, but it is described as removal of punishment.

In conclusion, if the prophecy of *dukhān* ('smoke') be taken as one of the portents of the Hour, so the phrase *kāshiful 'adhāb* (We are going to remove the punishment - كَاشِفُوا الْعَذَابِ) does not create any problem. In this interpretation, the phrase يَوْمَ نَبْطِشُ الْبَطْشَةَ الْكُبْرٰى "(Then,) the day We will seize (you) with the greatest seizure ... (44:16)" refers to the seizure of the Day of Judgement. In Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd's ﷺ interpretation it refers to the seizure of the battle of Badr. This is correct because that too was a great seizure, but that does not necessarily mean that a greater seizure will not be made on the Day of Judgement. It is possible that the Qur'ān, through these verses, is warning the unbelievers of an impending punishment. Whenever a punishment befell the enemies, the noble Companions took the verses to apply to that particular punishment. This does not negate its being one of the signs of the Hour. Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī cites Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Masud's narration with reference to 'Allamah Saffarini's book البحور الزاخرة 'al-Buhūr-uz-Zākhirah', thus:

هما دخانان مضى واحد والّذى بقى يملأ مابين السّماء والارض ولا يصيب المؤمن الا بالزكمة واما الكافر فيشق مسامعه فيبعث الله تعالى عند ذلك الرّيح الجنوب من اليمن فتقبض روح كل مؤمن ويبقى شرار النّاس. (روح)

"Two clouds of 'dukhān or smoke' will be produced at two different times: One, in fact, has already occurred on the occasion of the famine of Makkah and the other is still going to be produced. The second smoke will fill the atmosphere between the heaven and the earth. A believer will feel it like having a cold but it will tear through all the pores of an unbeliever. At that time Allah will send southerly wind from Yemen which will take away the soul of every believer; and there shall remain only the unbelievers, the worst of people." (Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī)

The author of Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī, in terms of his preferred interpretation, has expressed his suspicion on the authenticity of this narration. However, if the narration can be confirmed, then there will remain no conflict between the Tafsīr of Ibn Mas'ūd ﷺ and the express wordings of the Qur'ān and the Prophetic ahadith . Allah, the Pure and Exalted, knows best!

Verses 17 - 33

وَلَقَدْ فَتَنَّا قَبْلَهُمْ قَوْمَ فِرْعَوْنَ وَجَآءَهُمْ رَسُولٌ كَرِيمٌ ﴿١٧﴾ أَنْ أَدُّوٓا
إِلَيَّ عِبَادَ اللّٰهِ إِنِّي لَكُمْ رَسُولٌ أَمِينٌ ﴿١٨﴾ وَّأَنْ لَّا تَعْلُوا عَلَى اللّٰهِ
إِنِّيٓ اٰتِيكُمْ بِسُلْطٰنٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿١٩﴾ وَإِنِّي عُذْتُ بِرَبِّي وَرَبِّكُمْ أَنْ
تَرْجُمُونِ ﴿٢٠﴾ وَإِنْ لَّمْ تُؤْمِنُوا لِي فَاعْتَزِلُونِ ﴿٢١﴾ فَدَعَا رَبَّهٗٓ أَنَّ
هٰٓؤُلَآءِ قَوْمٌ مُّجْرِمُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾ فَأَسْرِ بِعِبَادِي لَيْلًا إِنَّكُمْ مُّتَّبَعُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾
وَاتْرُكِ الْبَحْرَ رَهْوًا إِنَّهُمْ جُنْدٌ مُّغْرَقُونَ ﴿٢٤﴾ كَمْ تَرَكُوا مِنْ جَنّٰتٍ
وَّعُيُونٍ ﴿٢٥﴾ وَّزُرُوعٍ وَّمَقَامٍ كَرِيمٍ ﴿٢٦﴾ وَّنَعْمَةٍ كَانُوا فِيهَا فٰكِهِينَ
﴿٢٧﴾ كَذٰلِكَ وَأَوْرَثْنٰهَا قَوْمًا اٰخَرِينَ ﴿٢٨﴾ فَمَا بَكَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ
السَّمَآءُ وَالْأَرْضُ وَمَا كَانُوا مُنْظَرِينَ ﴿٢٩﴾ وَلَقَدْ نَجَّيْنَا بَنِيٓ
إِسْرَآءِيلَ مِنَ الْعَذَابِ الْمُهِينِ ﴿٣٠﴾ مِنْ فِرْعَوْنَ إِنَّهٗ كَانَ عَالِيًا مِّنَ
الْمُسْرِفِينَ ﴿٣١﴾ وَلَقَدِ اخْتَرْنٰهُمْ عَلٰى عِلْمٍ عَلَى الْعٰلَمِينَ ﴿٣٢﴾
وَاٰتَيْنٰهُمْ مِّنَ الْاٰيٰتِ مَا فِيهِ بَلٰٓؤٌا مُّبِينٌ ﴿٣٣﴾

And We did test the people of Fir'aun prior to them, and a noble messenger came to them [17] saying, " Deliver to me the slaves of Allah. I am an honest messenger to you." [18] and saying, " Do not be haughty against Allah. I bring to you a clear proof. [19] And I have sought refuge with my Lord and your Lord, lest you stone me to death. [20] And if you do not believe in me, then keep away from me." [21] Then he prayed to his Lord saying, " These are a guilty people." [22] (So, Allah answered his prayer saying,) " Now, take away my slaves at night. You will certainly be chased. [23] And leave the sea in the state of stillness; they are an army that is sure to be drowned." [24] How many gardens and fountains have they left behind_ [25]_ and how many fields and noble sites, [26] and how many a luxury they used to rejoice in! [27] This is how it happened. And We made other people inherit all this. [28] So, neither the sky and earth wept over them, nor were they given a respite. [29] And

We delivered the children of Isra'il from the humiliating punishment, [30] **from Fir'aun. Indeed, he was haughty, one of the transgressors.** [31] **And We chose them, with knowledge,**[1] **above all the worlds.** [32] **And We gave them the clear signs in which there was a manifest blessing.** [33]

Commentary

وَإِنِّي عُذْتُ بِرَبِّي وَرَبِّكُمْ أَن تَرْجُمُونِ "And I have sought refuge with my Lord and your Lord, lest you stone me to death. (44:20)" The word rajm means 'to stone to death'. Another meaning of the word is 'to revile or to make a verbal assault or to heap up insults'. Both senses are possible here, but it seems more likely that the word is used here in the sense of stoning to death, because Fir'aun's people must have been threatening Prophet Mūsā عليه السلام with death.

وَاتْرُكِ الْبَحْرَ رَهْوًا "And leave the sea in the state of stillness; (44:24)" The word *rahwan* means 'to be still/calm/motionless'. When Prophet Mūsā عليه السلام and his companions crossed the sea, Mūsā عليه السلام naturally desired for the sea to go back to its original state. So he wanted to strike it with his staff so that it would form a barrier between them and Fir'aun to prevent him from reaching them. But Allah commanded him to leave it as it was, quiet and divided, and gave him the glad tidings that they were a host to be drowned, and he should not fear either being overtaken by Fir'aun or drowning in the sea. When Fir'aun, with his host, will reach the middle of the dry path, Allah will cause the water to flow and they will drown. (Ibn Kathīr).

وَأَوْرَثْنَاهَا قَوْمًا آخَرِينَ "...And We made other people inherit all this." (44:28) In Sūrah Shu'ara', it is explicitly stated that 'other people' refers to the Children of Israel. It is objected that there is no historical evidence to show that the Children of Israel ever settled again in Egypt. This objection has been rebutted in Sūrah Shu'arā'.

Weeping of the Sky and the Earth

فَمَا بَكَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ السَّمَاءُ وَالْأَرْضُ "So, neither the sky and earth wept over them... (44:29)". This means they did not perform any righteous deeds on

(1) It means that the preference given to them was based on the divine knowledge that they deserved it, because they were the only people at that time who believed in the Oneness of Allah and had submitted themselves to His commands.

earth which would weep for them when they died, nor did any of their righteous deeds ascend through the gates of heaven, so that the sky would weep on their death. There are several ahadith which confirm that when a righteous person dies, the heaven and earth weep. Ḥāfiẓ Abū Ya'lā reports on the authority of Sayyidnā Anas ﷺ that the Prophet of Allah said: "For every person there are two gates in the heaven/sky. Through one of them his sustenance descends, and through the other his deeds and his conversation ascend. When he dies, the gates remember him and weep. Then the Prophet ﷺ recited the following verse as an evidence of his statement: فَمَا بَكَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ السَّمَآءُ وَالْاَرْضُ " So, neither the sky and earth wept over them...(44:29)". Similar reports are narrated on the authority of Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ (Ibn Kathīr). Sayyidnā Shuraih Ibn 'Ubaid al-Ḥaḍramī ﷺ narrates that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said: "If a believer dies away from home where there is no one to weep for him, the heaven and earth weep for him." On this occasion too, the Holy Prophet ﷺ recited the same verse (29), adding that neither the sky nor the earth weeps for a non-believer. (Ibn Jarīr). Sayyidnā 'Alī ﷺ also upholds that the heaven and earth weep for a righteous person. (Ibn Kathīr).

Some scholars interpret the verse metaphorically, not literally. They say that the sky and the earth do not really weep, in the primary sense of the word. The verse purports to say that their existence is so insignificant that when they were wiped out, it did not cause grief to anyone. In the light of the above narratives, the real weeping of the heaven and earth in this context appears to be preferable. If the literal or primary sense of an expression is possible, there is no need to interpret it metaphorically or figuratively. The narratives quoted above support our argument - that the verse must be interpreted in its basic sense, and not in the figurative sense. It may be objected that neither the heaven nor the earth has any sense so that they would weep in the primary sense in which we understand it. Its rebuttal is simple: Obviously, every member of the universe has some sense, to a higher or lower degree, as attested by the Qur'ān اِنْ مِّنْ شَیْءٍ اِلَّا یُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِهٖ "...And there is not a single thing that does not extol His purity and praise, but you do not understand their extolling... (17:44)". Gradually, contemporary science - through its research and experiment - is now reaching the same conclusion. Of course, it is not necessary for the heavens and the earth to be weeping in

the same way as human beings do. The way of their weeping would surely be different from humans but we are unaware of its reality.

وَلَقَدِ اخْتَرْنٰهُمْ عَلٰى عِلْمٍ عَلَى الْعٰلَمِيْنَ "And We chose them, with knowledge above all the worlds. (44:32)," This does not imply that the Children of Israel are superior to the Ummah of Muḥammad ﷺ, because the verse means that the Children of Israel were given superiority over all the people of their time. This is just like the Qur'ān has described the merit of Sayyidah Maryam عليها السلام as being superior to the نِسَاءِ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ "women of the worlds (3:42) which means that she was superior to the women of her time." It is also possible that the Children of Israel have some sort of superiority to all the people of all times and ages from a particular angle, but collectively the Ummah of the Final Messenger ﷺ holds the highest status. (See Ibn Kathīr and other sources for details.)

عَلٰى عِلْمٍ "with knowledge" means that every work of Allah has wisdom. Thus wisdom underlying Allah's knowledge dictated that they be granted superiority, and they were granted accordingly.

وَاٰتَيْنٰهُمْ مِّنَ الْاٰيٰتِ مَافِيْهِ بَلٰٓؤٌا مُّبِيْنٌ "And We gave them the clear signs in which there was a manifest blessing. (44:33) " The word 'signs' refers to the miracles of the staff, the shining hand and others. The word بَلٰٓؤٌ *bala'* has two senses: (1) blessing; and (2) trial. Here both senses are possible. (Qurṭubī).

Verses 34 - 42

اِنَّ هٰٓؤُلَآءِ لَيَقُوْلُوْنَ ﴿٣٤﴾ اِنْ هِيَ اِلَّا مَوْتَتُنَا الْاُوْلٰى وَمَا نَحْنُ
بِمُنْشَرِيْنَ ﴿٣٥﴾ فَاْتُوْا بِاٰبَآئِنَآ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ صٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿٣٦﴾ اَهُمْ خَيْرٌ اَمْ
قَوْمُ تُبَّعٍ ۙ وَّالَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ ۭ اَهْلَكْنٰهُمْ ۡ اِنَّهُمْ كَانُوْا مُجْرِمِيْنَ ﴿٣٧﴾
وَمَا خَلَقْنَا السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا لٰعِبِيْنَ ﴿٣٨﴾ مَا
خَلَقْنٰهُمَآ اِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ وَلٰكِنَّ اَكْثَرَهُمْ لَايَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٣٩﴾ اِنَّ يَوْمَ
الْفَصْلِ مِيْقَاتُهُمْ اَجْمَعِيْنَ ﴿٤٠﴾ يَوْمَ لَايُغْنِيْ مَوْلًى عَنْ مَّوْلًى شَيْئًا
وَّلَاهُمْ يُنْصَرُوْنَ ﴿٤١﴾ اِلَّا مَنْ رَّحِمَ اللّٰهُ ۭ اِنَّهٗ هُوَالْعَزِيْزُ الرَّحِيْمُ ﴿٤٢﴾

These people say, [34] "The real end is nothing but our first death, and we are not going to be resurrected. [35] So, (O believers,) bring our fathers, if you are true (in your belief in resurrection.)" [36] Are they better or the people of Tubba' and those who were before them? We have destroyed them. They were guilty indeed. [37] And We did not create the heavens and the earth and what is between them just as players. [38] We did not create them but with true purpose, but most of them do not know. [39] The Day of Decision is the appointed time for all of them – [40] the day when no close relation will be of any use to any close relation, nor will they be helped, [41] except the One on whom Allah has mercy. Of course, He is the All-Mighty, the Very-Merciful. [42]

Commentary

فَأْتُوا بِآبَآئِنَآ إِن كُنتُمْ صَٰدِقِينَ ("Bring our fathers, if you are true (in your belief in resurrection".) (44:36)". Allah did not give an answer to this argument of theirs, because it was too obvious to need explanation, for the resurrection will happen on the Day of Judgement, not in this world. Allah will bring back to life all human beings in the Hereafter. Life and death in this world are bound by specific natural laws and wisdom. If Allah is not bringing back to life those who died long ago at this time, it does not necessarily imply that He will not be able to give life after death in the Hereafter. The following statement embodies their false/absurd reasoning: In logical terminology, it may be said that the negation of a particular thing does not necessarily imply the negation of a general thing.
(Bayān-ul-Qur'ān)

The Story of *Tubba'*

أَهُمْ خَيْرٌ أَمْ قَوْمُ تُبَّعٍ "Are they better or the people of *Tubba'*? (44:37)". The people of *Tubba'* have been referred to twice in the Qur'ān. Here and in Sūrah Qāf. In both places only their name has been mentioned without recounting their chronicle. Therefore, the commentators have discussed extensively about the people of Tubba' , trying to identify them and their history. *Tubba'* is not the name of a particular individual, but is said to be the royal title of the kings of Ḥimyar in Yemen. The Kings of Yemen were only known by this title when held sway over Ḥimyar, Arabia, Syria, 'Irāq and parts of Africa for a long time; western part of Yemen was their capital. Therefore, the plural of Tubba' is Tababi'ah, and the kings are called Tababi'ah of Yemen. It is not clear which of the Tababi'ah is

referred to here. Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Kathīr's research and conclusion would appear to be most plausible. His conclusion is that *Tubba'* here refers to *Tubba'* Ausat (Middle *Tubba'*) whose name was As'ad Abū Kuraib Ibn Ma'dīkarab Yamani. This King ruled at least seven hundred years before the advent of the Holy Prophet of Allah ﷺ. Among the Ḥimyarī Kings, he ruled the longest. During his rule, he went on a journey of conquest invading many regions and annexing them to his domain until he reached Samarqand, expanding his kingdom. According to Muḥammad Ibn Isḥāq's narration, during his conquests once he passed by the area of Madīnah and intended to attack it. The inhabitants of Madīnah adopted the attitude that during the day they used to resist his attacks and during the night they entertained him. He felt embarrassed and abandoned the intention of fighting. During this period, two Jewish Rabbis warned him that that was the place of migration of the Final Prophet of Allah, and that he would never be able to prevail over that city. He was thus persuaded and left Madīnah and went away with the two Rabbis to Yemen. The Rabbis invited him to embrace the Mosaic religion, and he did accept it. As a result, his people were also influenced by him and they too embraced the Mosaic religion. However, after his death they went astray and reverted to idolatry and fire-worship. This brought down on them the Divine wrath, the details of which are available in Sūrah Saba'. (Condensed from Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr: vol. 4 /p 144). This incident shows that the Tubba' mentioned here had himself embraced Islam, but his people later went astray. On both occasions the Qur'ān has made reference to the 'people of *Tubba'*, and not to Tubba' himself . This is supported by the narratives of Sayyidnā Sahl Ibn Sa'd and Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ which are recorded by Ibn Abī Ḥātim, Imām Aḥmad, Ṭabarānī and others that the Messenger of Allah said: لاتسبّوا تبّعا فانّه قد كان اسلم "Do not revile *Tubba'*, because he had embraced Islam." (ibidem).

مَا خَلَقْنٰهُمَآ اِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ وَلٰكِنَّ اَكْثَرَهُمْ لَايَعْلَمُوْنَ "We did not create them but with true purpose, yet most of them do not know. (44:39)" In other words, every wise and thinking person should realise that there is a purpose and objective for creating this universe. The heavens and the earth and everything created in them manifest many realities. Examples are: (1) the manifestation of Divine power; (2) the possibility of the Hereafter. Obviously, the Supreme Creator Who drew out such huge bodies from the

realm of non-existence into the realm of existence surely has the power to destroy them and re-create them; (3) the need for retribution (reward/punishment). If there is no retribution in the Hereafter, the very existence of the universe would be rendered purposeless or its purpose would be defeated. The wisdom underlying the creation of the universe is to make it *dar-ul-imtiḥān* (the domain of test-n-trial) and the Hereafter is the domain of reward and punishment. Otherwise, the outcome of both good and bad will necessarily be the same. This is far from Divine wisdom, or not in keeping with Divine wisdom; and (4) urging the thinking people to obey Allah and thank Him for having granted man this entire universe or creation as His great blessing

Verses 43 - 59

إِنَّ شَجَرَتَ الزَّقُّومِ ﴿٤٣﴾ طَعَامُ الْأَثِيمِ ﴿٤٤﴾ كَالْمُهْلِ ۚ يَغْلِي فِي
الْبُطُونِ ﴿٤٥﴾ كَغَلْيِ الْحَمِيمِ ﴿٤٦﴾ خُذُوهُ فَاعْتِلُوهُ إِلَىٰ سَوَاءِ
الْجَحِيمِ ﴿٤٧﴾ ثُمَّ صُبُّوا فَوْقَ رَأْسِهِ مِنْ عَذَابِ الْحَمِيمِ ﴿٤٨﴾ ذُقْ
إِنَّكَ أَنتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْكَرِيمُ ﴿٤٩﴾ إِنَّ هَٰذَا مَا كُنتُم بِهِ تَمْتَرُونَ ﴿٥٠﴾ إِنَّ
الْمُتَّقِينَ فِي مَقَامٍ أَمِينٍ ﴿٥١﴾ فِي جَنَّاتٍ وَعُيُونٍ ﴿٥٢﴾ يَلْبَسُونَ مِن
سُندُسٍ وَإِسْتَبْرَقٍ مُّتَقَابِلِينَ ﴿٥٣﴾ كَذَٰلِكَ وَزَوَّجْنَاهُم بِحُورٍ عِينٍ
﴿٥٤﴾ يَدْعُونَ فِيهَا بِكُلِّ فَاكِهَةٍ آمِنِينَ ﴿٥٥﴾ لَا يَذُوقُونَ فِيهَا الْمَوْتَ
إِلَّا الْمَوْتَةَ الْأُولَىٰ ۖ وَوَقَاهُمْ عَذَابَ الْجَحِيمِ ﴿٥٦﴾ فَضْلًا مِّن رَّبِّكَ ۚ
ذَٰلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ ﴿٥٧﴾ فَإِنَّمَا يَسَّرْنَاهُ بِلِسَانِكَ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُونَ
﴿٥٨﴾ فَارْتَقِبْ إِنَّهُم مُّرْتَقِبُونَ ﴿٥٩﴾

Indeed the tree of *zaqqūm* [43] is the food of the sinful, [44] like dregs of oil. It will boil in the bellies [45] like the boiling of hot water. [46] (It will be said,) "Seize him, and drag him into the midst of the Hell. [47] Then pour on his head some torment of boiling water." [48] "Have a taste! You are the 'one of might', the 'one of honour'. [49] This is the thing about which you used to be sceptic."

[50] **Indeed the God-fearing will be in a place free from fear,** [51] **in gardens and fountains.** [52] **They will be dressed in fine silk and thick silk, facing each other.** [53] **Thus (it will happen,) and We will marry them with houris having big dark eyes.** [54] **They will call therein for every fruit peacefully.** [55] **They will not taste death therein, except for the first death (they faced in the world). And He will save them from the torment of the Hell,** [56] **as a favour from your Lord. That is the great achievement.** [57] **So, We had made it (the Qur'an) easy in your tongue, so that they may take lesson.** [58] **Now wait. They too are waiting.** [59]

Commentary

Punishment and Reward of the Hereafter

In these verses, according to the style of the Qur'ān, Allah describes Hell and the way the unbelievers will be punished, and Paradise and the way the believers will be rewarded.

Punishment of the Dwellers of Hell

اِنَّ شَجَرَتَ الزَّقُّوْمِ "Indeed the tree of *zaqqūm*... (44:43)". Some necessary information regarding the reality of *zaqqūm* has been given in Sūrah Aṣ-Ṣāffāt. Please see under (37:64-65). Here the Qur'ān apparently indicates that the infidels will be given *zaqqūm* to eat even before they enter Hell, because in this verse the Qur'ān says that after having fed them with *zaqqūm* they will be seized by the keepers of Hell and dragged into the middle of the blazing fire of Hell. According to some commentators, this is the meaning of (56:56) Sūrah Al-Wāqi'ah هٰذَا نُزُلُهُمْ يَوْمَ الدِّيْنِ (This will be their entertainment on the Day of Requital". They argue that the word *nuzul* (entertainment) originally refers to the starter food and provision served to guests to make them feel welcome before the main course of entertainment is served. The main course of food and provision served later on is called *ḍiyāfah* or *ma'dubah*. The wordings of the Qur'ān do carry the possibility that the feeding of *zaqqūm* could be after the entry into Hell. In this case the word *nuzul* would refer, by extension, to the main course of meals and provisions served. The verse under comment which speaks about 'dragging the dweller of Hell towards the middle of the blazing fire' means, he would already be in Hell but after feeding him *zaqqūm* he will be dragged towards the middle of the fire to expose him to a greater degree of disgrace and torture. Allah knows

best! (Condensed from Bayān-ul-Qur'ān).

Reward of the Inmates of Paradise

اِنَّ الْمُتَّقِيْنَ فِىْ مَقَامٍ اَمِيْنٍ (Indeed the God-fearing will be in a place free from fear, - 44:51). The current set of verses describes the eternal blessings of Paradise. Almost all sorts of blessings have been referred to in these verses, because the following are generally the human needs:

(1) fine dwelling;

(2) fine clothing;

(3) the best life-partner;

(4) the best food;

(5) the satisfaction that these blessings will remain available; and

(6) assurance of total security from grief and affliction. In these verses all the six kinds of blessings for the inmates of Paradise have been mentioned.

Let us carefully analyze the six verses in this set. The dwelling of the inmates is described as *'āmin* "free from fear". The best human dwelling, according to verse (51), is the one that is secure from all kinds of dangers.

سُنْدُسٍ وَّ اِسْتَبْرَقٍ (... fine silk and thick silk.... - 44:53) Both the words refer to 'silk'. The word sundus refers to "fine silk" and the word *istabraq* refers to "thick silk".

وَزَوَّجْنٰهُمْ بِحُوْرٍ عِيْنٍ (We will marry them with houris having big dark eyes) - 44:54). The word *tazwīj* originally means 'to make one person partner of another'. Later on it came to be utilised abundantly in the sense of 'marrying'. According to the second sense, the men of Paradise will be married technically to houris having big dark eyes. This is the apparent sense of verse (54). Although the inmates of Paradise will not be legally obligated to observe the precepts of Sharī'ah, the purpose of marriage will be to honour them. Therefore, this should not raise any objection. If the word is taken in the first sense, houris having big dark eyes will be given as life partners to the men of Paradise. The houris in this case will be granted to them as a gift. There will be no need for a contract of marriage as is done in this world.

لَايَذُوْقُوْنَ فِيْهَا الْمَوْتَ إِلَّا الْمَوْتَةَ الْأُوْلٰى (They will not taste death therein, except for the first death (they faced in the world) - 44:56). In other words, they shall suffer no death other than the first death which they had encountered at the end of their lives in this world. The dwellers of Hell as well will suffer only one death at the end of their lives in this world. The latter, however, will suffer a greater degree of torture when they will know that they will remain alive in this miserable state of punishment, whereas for the former the thought that Allah has saved them from the torment of the Hell, that the gardens of Paradise are eternal, that they will enjoy the delights of paradise for ever and its blessings will never cease or be taken away from them, will enhance the degree of their happiness, never to diminish .

Alḥamdulillah
the commentary on
Sūrah Ad-Dukān
ends here.

Sūrah Aljāthiyah

(Kneeling)

Sūrah Aljāthiyah is Makkī, and it has 37 verses and 4 sections

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 11

حٰمٓ ﴿١﴾ تَنْزِيْلُ الْكِتٰبِ مِنَ اللّٰهِ الْعَزِيْزِ الْحَكِيْمِ ﴿٢﴾ اِنَّ فِى
السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ لَاٰيٰتٍ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿٣﴾ وَفِىْ خَلْقِكُمْ وَمَا يَبُثُّ
مِنْ دَآبَّةٍ اٰيٰتٌ لِّقَوْمٍ يُّوْقِنُوْنَ ﴿٤﴾ وَاخْتِلَافِ الَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَمَآ اَنْزَلَ
اللّٰهُ مِنَ السَّمَآءِ مِنْ رِّزْقٍ فَاَحْيَا بِهِ الْاَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا وَتَصْرِيْفِ
الرِّيٰحِ اٰيٰتٌ لِّقَوْمٍ يَّعْقِلُوْنَ ﴿٥﴾ تِلْكَ اٰيٰتُ اللّٰهِ نَتْلُوْهَا عَلَيْكَ بِالْحَقِّ ۚ
فَبِاَيِّ حَدِيْثٍۭ بَعْدَ اللّٰهِ وَاٰيٰتِهٖ يُؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿٦﴾ وَيْلٌ لِّكُلِّ اَفَّاكٍ اَثِيْمٍ ﴿٧﴾
يَّسْمَعُ اٰيٰتِ اللّٰهِ تُتْلٰى عَلَيْهِ ثُمَّ يُصِرُّ مُسْتَكْبِرًا كَاَنْ لَّمْ يَسْمَعْهَا ۚ
فَبَشِّرْهُ بِعَذَابٍ اَلِيْمٍ ﴿٨﴾ وَاِذَا عَلِمَ مِنْ اٰيٰتِنَا شَيْئًا ۨ اتَّخَذَهَا هُزُوًا ط
اُولٰٓئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مُّهِيْنٌ ﴿٩﴾ مِنْ وَّرَآئِهِمْ جَهَنَّمُ ۚ وَلَا يُغْنِىْ عَنْهُمْ
مَّا كَسَبُوْا شَيْئًا وَّلَا مَا اتَّخَذُوْا مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ اَوْلِيَآءَ ۚ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ
عَظِيْمٌ ﴿١٠﴾ هٰذَا هُدًى ۚ وَالَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا بِاٰيٰتِ رَبِّهِمْ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مِّنْ

رِّجْزٍ اَلِيْمٌ ﴿١١﴾

Hā Mīm. [1] This is revelation of the Book from Allah, the All-Mighty, the All-Wise. [2] Surely in the heavens and the earth, there are signs for those who have faith. [3] And in your creation and in the living beings that He scatters on the earth, there are signs for a people who believe. [4] And in the alternation of the day and the night, and in the provision He has sent down from the sky, then has revived the earth after its death, and in changing of the winds, there are signs for a people who understand. [5] These are Allah's verses that We recite to you rightly. Then, in which discourse, after Allah and His verses, will they believe? [6] Woe to every sinful liar, [7] who hears Allah's verses being recited to him, then he remains adamant out of arrogance, as if he never heard them. So give him the 'good news' of a painful punishment. [8] And when he learns about something of Our verses, he takes it as a laughing stock. For such people, there is a humiliating punishment. [9] In front of them, there is Jahannam. And whatever they have earned will not be of any use to them, nor the patrons they have adopted instead of Allah. And for them, there is a great punishment. [10] This is a guidance. And those who reject the verses of their Lord, for them there is a painful punishment of the divine wrath. [11]

Commentary

This entire Sūrah was revealed at Makkah except for one verse. According to one view, the following verse was revealed at Madīnah: قُلْ لِّلَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا يَغْفِرُوْا لِلَّذِيْنَ لَا يَرْجُوْنَ اَيَّامَ اللّٰهِ ("Tell those who believe that they should forgive those who do not believe in Allah's days ... 45:14)". According to this opinion, the rest of the Sūrah was revealed at Makkah. The overwhelming view, however, is that the entire Sūrah was revealed before hijrah or migration. Like other Makkī Sūrahs, its basic subject-matter is the basic beliefs of Islam, such as Oneness of Allah, messenger-ship of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and the Hereafter.

Arguments and evidence have been adduced in favour of all fundamental articles of Islamic Faith. Evidence, especially in favour of the Hereafter, has been advanced. Criticisms of atheists, and the fallacious arguments of the sceptics have been refuted elaborately .

إِنَّ فِى السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْأَرْضِ لَاٰيٰتٍ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ("Surely in the heavens and the earth, there are signs for those who have faith.. ..45:3)" The purpose of this verse, and similar other verses, is to affirm the Oneness of Allah. Similar verses are available in [2:164] إِنَّ فِى خَلْقِ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ("Surely, in the creation of heavens and earth...") where their detailed commentary will be found. How the two verses prove the Oneness of Allah is also explained on that occasion. In the two places, there is a slight difference in the argumentation: Scholars interested might find the finer points of the difference discussed by Imām Rāzi in his Tafsīr Kabīr rather interesting. It is worth noting that in all these verses reference is made to the various signs in nature and a concluding statement is made on each occasion: Here it concludes: 'there are signs for those who have faith', in another place it concludes: 'there are signs for those who believe' and in a third place it concludes: 'there are signs for those who understand'. In all these cases, there are stylistic variations, but in addition the current verse points to the fact that only those people will be able to benefit who have faith. In the second case, it will be beneficial to those people who might not immediately embrace the Faith, but they do develop certainty in their hearts, in that these signs do point to the Oneness of Allah. Possibly this certainty one day or the other will turn into 'Faith'. In the third case, it could benefit those who may not be immediate believers or firm in belief, but they do have sound heart to understand. If they search into the signs with deep insight, they will inevitably end up with faith and firm belief. However, people devoid of sound intellect or unwilling to use it will remain unconvinced, even if thousands of evidence or arguments are put forward to them.

وَيْلٌ لِّكُلِّ أَفَّاكٍ أَثِيْمٍ ("Woe to every sinful liar... 45:7)" There are several views related to the background of revelation of this verse. Some Traditions relate that the verse was revealed in connection with Naḍr Ibn Ḥārith. Others report that it was revealed in connection with Ḥārith Ibn Kaldah, and yet others feel it is about Abū Jahl and his comrades. (Qurṭubī). There is no need to refer to a particular person in order to determine the meaning of a Qur'ānic verse. The word kull [every] refers to every person who bears the characteristics of the three persons who might have been in the background of the revelation of the verse.

مِنْ وَّرَآئِهِمْ جَهَنَّمُ "In front of them, there is Jahannam...45:10" The word

وَرَاء *warā'* in Arabic is mostly used in the sense of "behind" and occasionally used in the sense of "front". Most commentators have taken the word in this context to mean 'front' and we have translated it accordingly. However, some of the commentators have taken it in this context to mean 'back/behind' and interpreted it to mean that those who are living in haughtiness and arrogance, the fire of Hell is trailing behind/after them. (Qurṭubī).

Verse 12-15

اَللّٰهُ الَّذِىْ سَخَّرَلَكُمُ الْبَحْرَ لِتَجْرِىَ الْفُلْكُ فِيْهِ بِاَمْرِهٖ وَلِتَبْتَغُوْا مِنْ فَضْلِهٖ وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُوْنَ ﴿١٢﴾ وَسَخَّرَلَكُمْ مَّا فِى السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَا فِى الْاَرْضِ جَمِيْعًا مِّنْهُ ۭ اِنَّ فِىْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيٰتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَّتَفَكَّرُوْنَ ﴿١٣﴾ قُلْ لِّلَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا يَغْفِرُوْا لِلَّذِيْنَ لَايَرْجُوْنَ اَيَّامَ اللّٰهِ لِيَجْزِىَ قَوْمًاۢ بِمَا كَانُوْا يَكْسِبُوْنَ ﴿١٤﴾ مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَلِنَفْسِهٖ ۚ وَمَنْ اَسَآءَ فَعَلَيْهَا ۡ ثُمَّ اِلٰى رَبِّكُمْ تُرْجَعُوْنَ ﴿١٥﴾

Allah is the One who has subjugated for you the sea, so that the ships may sail in it with His command, and so that you may seek His grace, and so that you offer gratitude. [12] **And He has subjugated for you whatever there is in the heavens and whatever there is in the earth, all from His own. Surely in this, there are signs for a people who reflect.** [13] **Tell those who believe that they should forgive those who do not believe in Allah's days, so that He may recompense a people for what they used to earn.** [14] **Whoever acts righteously, it is for his own benefit, and who does evil, it is against it. Then towards your Lord, you will be returned.** [15]

Commentary

اَللّٰهُ الَّذِىْ سَخَّرَلَكُمُ الْبَحْرَ (الى) وَلِتَبْتَغُوْا مِنْ فَضْلِهٖ ("Allah is the One who has subjugated for you the sea, so that you may seek His grace, ... 45:12)". Generally, when Qur'ān uses the expression 'to seek His grace' it refers to exerting oneself in seeking one's livelihood. Another meaning of the phrase could be that man has been given the skill to move the boats or pilot the ships on the surface of the waters so that he may carry out his

commercial activities across the globe. It is possible that 'seeking grace' does not have anything to do with the sailing of the boats or the ships. Therefore, a third meaning is possible. 'Subjugating the sea' has a special meaning, that is, Allah has created many useful things in the sea and subjugated the sea for the benefit of mankind so that they may exploit the minerals and other wealth. Contemporary science confirms that the oceans and seas have much more minerals and much more wealth hidden in them than in the dry land.

قُلْ لِّلَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا يَغْفِرُوْا لِلَّذِيْنَ لَايَرْجُوْنَ اَيَّامَ اللّٰهِ ("Tell those who believe that they should forgive those who do not believe in Allah's days ...14)". There are two narrations recorded relating to its cause of revelation. According to one narration, a pagan in Makkah reviled Sayyidnā 'Umar ﷺ and the latter intended to retaliate, but this verse came down and asked the believers to forgive the unbelievers and endure their harm that they direct against them. According to this incident the verse is Makkī. Another narration reports that on the occasion of the battle of Banī-l-Muṣṭaliq, the Prophet of Allah and his Companions pitched their tent at a well called Muraisī'. 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Ubayy, the leader of the hypocrites, was with the Muslims. He sent his servant to fetch water from the well. He was delayed in returning. 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Ubayy asked him to give reason why he was late. He replied that one of Sayyidnā 'Umar's ﷺ servants was sitting on the bank of the well. He did not permit anyone to draw water unless the water-skins of the Prophet of Allah ﷺ and Sayyidnā Abū Bakr ﷺ were filled. 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Ubayy cynically quoted the following proverb: سمّن كلبک يأكلک "Fatten your dog and it will eat you up." Sayyidnā 'Umar ﷺ heard about it, he armed himself with his sword and went towards 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Ubayy. This verse was revealed on that occasion. According to this incident, the verse is Madanī. (Qurṭubī and Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī). If both the chains of transmitters can be authenticated, the two incidents can be synchronized thus: In the first instance, the verse was originally revealed in Makkah. Then a similar incident took place on the occasion of the battle of Banī-l-Muṣṭaliq. The Messenger of Allah recited the verse and applied it to the second incident. This often happened in cases of the causes of Qur'ānic revelation. Another likelihood is that when the incident of the battle of Banī-l-Muṣṭaliq took place, Sayyidnā Jibra'īl ﷺ might have come down with the verse the second time and reminded that this is

an occasion to act upon it. In the technical parlance of Tafsīr, it is called نزول مكرر or 'repeated revelation'. The verse contains the expression اَيَّامَ اللّٰهِ (Allah's days) which, according to most commentators, refers to 'reward and punishment' which Allah will requite on the Day of Requital. The word *ayyām* (days) in the Arabic language is abundantly used in the sense of 'turn of events'.

Another point worth noting is that when the Qur'ān commanded 'Say, [O Muḥammad], to the believers that they should forgive the disbelievers, it did not say, "forgive the idolators"; instead it has said, "...forgive those who do not believe in Allah's days ...[14]". This probably purports to say that the real chastisement awaits them in the Hereafter, but because the unbelievers do not believe in the Hereafter, the punishment will be unexpected for them. An unexpected torture is most excruciating, and therefore the torment will be most harrowing and agonizing. Thus they will be recompensed and repaid fully for all their evil deeds. The Muslims are not to bother about taking them to task for every little thing.

Some of the scholars maintain that the rule of forgiving the infidels applied only before the revelation of the verse of jihad. When *jihād* was ordained, the rule of forgiveness, in terms of the current verse, was abrogated. However, most research scholars express the view that this verse has nothing to do with the verse of *jihād*. The current verse sets down the general social law that the Muslims should not wreak vengeance for every little thing. This law is universally applicable in every age and situation - the social law is needed even at the present time, and therefore it is not accurate to treat it as abrogated - especially if we were to take into account the circumstances under which it was revealed: the battle of Banī-l-Muṣṭaliq. If this battle is the cause of revelation of this verse, then verses of *jihād* cannot be the abrogators, because they were revealed before this event.

Verses 16 - 20

وَلَقَدْ اٰتَيْنَا بَنِىْٓ اِسْرَآءِيْلَ الْكِتٰبَ وَالْحُكْمَ وَالنُّبُوَّةَ وَرَزَقْنٰهُمْ مِّنَ
الطَّيِّبٰتِ وَفَضَّلْنٰهُمْ عَلَى الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿١٦﴾ وَاٰتَيْنٰهُمْ بَيِّنٰتٍ مِّنَ الْاَمْرِ ۚ

فَمَا اخْتَلَفُوْٓا اِلَّا مِنْۢ بَعْدِ مَا جَآءَهُمُ الْعِلْمُ لا بَغْيًاۢ بَيْنَهُمْ ط اِنَّ رَبَّكَ
يَقْضِیْ بَيْنَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ فِيْمَا كَانُوْا فِيْهِ يَخْتَلِفُوْنَ ﴿۱۷﴾ ثُمَّ
جَعَلْنٰكَ عَلٰى شَرِيْعَةٍ مِّنَ الْاَمْرِ فَاتَّبِعْهَا وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ اَهْوَآءَ الَّذِيْنَ لَا
يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿۱۸﴾ اِنَّهُمْ لَنْ يُّغْنُوْا عَنْكَ مِنَ اللّٰهِ شَيْئًا ط وَ اِنَّ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ
بَعْضُهُمْ اَوْلِيَآءُ بَعْضٍ ج وَاللّٰهُ وَلِیُّ الْمُتَّقِيْنَ ﴿۱۹﴾ هٰذَا بَصَآئِرُ لِلنَّاسِ
وَهُدًى وَّرَحْمَةٌ لِّقَوْمٍ يُّوْقِنُوْنَ ﴿۲۰﴾

And We gave the children of Isrā'īl the book and the wisdom and the prophethood, and provided them with good things, and preferred them above the worlds. [16] **And We gave them clear proofs of the Matter (i.e. the religion). So they did not fall into disagreement out of mutual jealousy, but after the knowledge had come to them. Surely your Lord will judge between them, on the Day of Judgment, in the matters in which they used to differ.** [17] **Then We have put you on a certain way of the Matter (i.e. the religion); so follow it, and do not follow the desires of those who do not know.** [18] **They will never avail you against Allah in the least. And the wrongdoers are friends to one another. And Allah is the friend of the God-fearing.** [19] **These are insights for the people, and guidance and mercy for a people who believe.** [20]

Commentary

These verses purport to confirm the risalah of the Final Messenger of Allah. Under this subject-matter, the Prophet of Allah is consoled for the persecution carried out by the enemies against him.

اِنَّ رَبَّکَ يَقْضِیْ بَيْنَهُمْ ("...Surely your Lord will judge between them, on the Day of Judgement, in the matters in which they used to differ... 45:17)" This far the verses confirm two points: This verse purports to say, firstly, that the Book of Mūsā ﷺ contains many clear prophecies about the advent of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and, secondly to comfort the Holy Prophet ﷺ, that the Israelites rejected him not because there was any dearth of arguments, signs and Divine prophecies to support and establish his claim, but because of jealousy, love of the world and personal desires, that

is, they did not like the very idea that the Final Messenger should have appeared from among the non-Israelites . (Bayān-ul-Qur'ān).

The Status of Previous Shari'ahs for Muslims

ثُمَّ جَعَلْنٰكَ عَلٰى شَرِيْعَةٍ مِّنَ الْاَمْرِ "Then We have put you on a certain way of the Matter (i.e. the religion)... 45:18". Here it may be borne in mind that the religion of Islam has certain fundamental articles of faith, such as the Oneness of Allah, the Hereafter and so on; and there are ordinances, laws and injunctions related to practical life. As far as the fundamental articles of faith are concerned, they are immutable and were imparted to every Prophet and his Ummah since the inception of man. However, laws relating to practical life were different for different Prophets and their people. The sacred laws of previous Sharī'ahs kept changing according to the needs of time and exigencies of circumstances. In the verse under comment, the second type of practical laws has been described as "...a certain way of the Matter (i.e. the religion)...". The jurists, on the basis of this verse, have ruled that the Ummah of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ must, of necessity, follow the sacred laws of the Sharī'ah of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ. As far as the sacred laws of the previous Sharī'ah are concerned, this Ummah is not legally bound to them unless the Qur'ān and Sunnah support or confirm them. Support or confirmation may take one of two forms, as follows: (1) the Qur'ān and Sunnah may explicitly say that a certain law of a certain Prophet must be followed by this Ummah; or (2) the Qur'ān and Sunnah may speak highly and favourably about a certain law of a previous Ummah without hinting that it is abrogated for this Ummah. This indicates that the law is applicable in the Sharī'ah of this Ummah also. In that case, the previous law becomes part of this Sharī'ah, and as such this Ummah is legally bound to follow it. This much is sufficient for us to understand the status of the previous Sharī'ahs. Details are available in the books of the Islamic jurisprudence.

Verses 21 - 22

اَمْ حَسِبَ الَّذِيْنَ اجْتَرَحُوا السَّيِّاٰتِ اَنْ نَّجْعَلَهُمْ كَالَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا
وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ ۙ سَوَآءً مَّحْيَاهُمْ وَمَمَاتُهُمْ ؕ سَآءَ مَا يَحْكُمُوْنَ
﴿٢١﴾ وَخَلَقَ اللّٰهُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضَ بِالْحَقِّ وَلِتُجْزٰى كُلُّ نَفْسٍ ۢ

بِمَا كَسَبَتْ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾

Do those who have committed evils assume that We will make them like those who believe and do righteous deeds, so as their life and death becomes equal? Evil is what they judge. [21] **And Allah has created the heavens and the earth with just purpose, and so that everybody is recompensed for what he (or she) earned. And they will not be wronged.** [22]

Commentary

The Hereafter: Divine Requital is Rationally Necessary

Of the two verses mentioned, the first one argues rationally that Divine reward and punishment are necessary. Every person is a witness to the fact that no one receives his full measure of reward or punishment for the good or bad deeds he does in this world. Generally, the unbelievers and evil-doers wallow in wealth and lead a life of luxury. The obedient servants of Allah, on the other hand, live in poverty, hardship and misery. In the first place, the crimes of the wicked criminals are often not detected. Even if they are detected, more often than not, they are not apprehended. If they are apprehended, they swear oaths - lawfully or unlawfully, truthfully or falsely - and try to find loopholes to escape punishment. In this way, one in a million might be punished and that too not fully. As a result, the rebels, who follow their selfish and base desires, move about in high spirits and without any hindrance, enjoying full powers in this world. The believers, on the other hand, who follow the Shari'ah strictly, do not touch many kinds of wealth and give up many pleasures because they treat them as unlawful. They only adopt the lawful ways of gaining anything in order to avoid calamities and afflictions. Thus they are deprived of many a comfort and pleasure in this world. Since this is the state of affairs where people are not rewarded or punished in this world in commensurate with their actions, it follows necessarily that there must be another world - the Hereafter and life after death - where people will be recompensed fully for their deeds. Otherwise, it would be absurd to refer to stealing, robbery, adultery, fornication, murder and so on as crimes, in this world. These people often lead a very successful life in this world. A thief or a robber acquires so much of wealth in a night that a university graduate might not be able to acquire it in years of employment and hard work. If there is no such world as the

Hereafter and accountability, then the thief or the robber would be thought to be better than the respectable university graduate. No reasonable person would ever accept this position. If it be pointed out that every government in the world has legislated severe punishments for criminals, then we would respond that experience shows that only the foolish criminals get caught. The clever habitual criminals always find loopholes, and ways and means of escaping punishment. For instance, the escape-door of bribery is always open for them and that is sufficient for them.

In short, the need for the Day of Requital may be denied only when it is conceded that there is no such thing as good and bad; or that whatever one acquires, by fair means or foul, it is absolutely rewardable. But no one accepts this position. Similarly it is absurd to believe that there is distinction between good and evil, but the consequences are equal, rather the criminal should have a more comfortable life than the righteous and innocent ones. There could be no greater degree of wrong than this. It is to this absurd judgement that the Qur'ān refers in سَوَآءً مَّحْيَاهُمْ وَمَمَاتُهُمْ ("...so as their life and death becomes equal? Evil is what they judge... 45:21)". It is a very unreasonable and unjustifiable position that evil-doers should be placed on the same pedestal as the righteous persons. Since the reward and punishment in this world are not given in full measure, then it necessarily follows that there should be life after death in the Hereafter where reward and punishment will be paid in full measure. Thus the second verse in the set complements the same subject وَلِتُجْزٰى كُلُّ نَفْسٍ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُوْنَ (...and so that everybody is recompensed for what he (or she) earned. And they will not be wronged. - 45:22). In other words, the Day of Requital is necessary in order to wipe out wrong and injustice. As for the question, why the people are not requited or recompensed for the good or bad deeds in this world, we would respond that this is not in keeping with the Divine wisdom of creation: He made this world the 'domain of deeds and test-n-trial', not the 'domain of requital'. Allah knows best!

Verses 23-26

اَفَرَءَيْتَ مَنِ اتَّخَذَ اِلٰهَهٗ هَوٰىهُ وَاَضَلَّهُ اللّٰهُ عَلٰى عِلْمٍ وَّخَتَمَ عَلٰى

سَمْعِهٖ وَقَلْبِهٖ وَجَعَلَ عَلٰى بَصَرِهٖ غِشٰوَةً ؕ فَمَنْ يَّهْدِيْهِ مِنْۢ بَعْدِ اللّٰهِ ؕ
اَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُوْنَ ﴿۲۳﴾ وَقَالُوْا مَا هِىَ اِلَّا حَيَاتُنَا الدُّنْيَا نَمُوْتُ وَنَحْيَا
وَمَا يُهْلِكُنَآ اِلَّا الدَّهْرُ ۚ وَمَا لَهُمْ بِذٰلِكَ مِنْ عِلْمٍ ۚ اِنْ هُمْ اِلَّا يَظُنُّوْنَ
﴿۲۴﴾ وَاِذَا تُتْلٰى عَلَيْهِمْ اٰيٰتُنَا بَيِّنٰتٍ مَّا كَانَ حُجَّتَهُمْ اِلَّآ اَنْ قَالُوا ائْتُوْا
بِاٰبَآئِنَآ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ صٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿۲۵﴾ قُلِ اللّٰهُ يُحْيِيْكُمْ ثُمَّ يُمِيْتُكُمْ ثُمَّ
يَجْمَعُكُمْ اِلٰى يَوْمِ الْقِيٰمَةِ لَارَيْبَ فِيْهِ وَلٰكِنَّ اَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَايَعْلَمُوْنَ
ع ﴿۲۶﴾

So, have you seen him who has taken his desires as his god, and Allah has let him go astray, despite having knowledge, and has sealed his ear and his heart, and put a cover on his eye? Now who will guide him after Allah? Still, do you not take lesson? [23] **And they say, "There is no life but our worldly life. We die and live, and nothing destroys us except time." And they have no knowledge about that; they do nothing but make conjectures.** [24] **And when Our verses are recited to them in all their clarity, their argument is none but that they say, "Bring our fathers, if you are truthful."** [25] **Say, "Allah gives you life, then makes you die, then He will assemble you on the Day of Judgement in which there is no doubt, but most of the people do not know.** [26]

Commentary

مَنِ اتَّخَذَ اِلٰهَهٗ هَوٰىهُ ("Have you seen him who has taken his desires as his god...45:23) In other words, he who has made his selfish desires his object of worship. Obviously, no unbeliever claims that his desires are his object of worship. Keeping this in view, this verse of the Qur'ān indicates that 'worship' actually means 'obedience'. Thus anyone who undertakes to obey someone against the obedience of Allah makes him the object of his worship instead of Allah. There are people who ignore what Allah has declared lawful and unlawful or what He has permitted and what has forbidden. People who do not care what Allah has forbidden and follow their whims and fancies, their desires are their god, in this sense, although they may not have uttered it by word of mouth. The same

theme has been versified by an 'Ārif:

سودہ گشت از سجدۂ راہِ بُتاں پیشانیم   چند برخود تہمت دینِ مسلمانی نہم

"My forehead has swollen by prostrating before the statues of beauty, although I claim to profess the religion of Islam."

In this couplet, the poet has portrayed selfish desires as statues. He who takes his desires as his leader and follows them is as good as their worshipper, that is why they have been described as their deities. Sayyidnā Abū 'Umāmah ﵁ narrates that the Messenger of Allah said: "Of all the deities worshipped under the firmament of the earth, the most detestable one in the sight of Allah is *hawa*, that is, selfish desires. Sayyidnā Shaddād Ibn 'Aws ﵁ narrates that the Messenger of Allah said: "A wise person is he who keeps his desires under control and works for life after death; and sinful is he who runs after his desires and yet expects the best in the Hereafter." Sayyidnā Sahl Ibn 'Abdullāh Tustarī ﵁ said: "Your ailment is your selfish desires. And if you oppose them, it will turn into your cure." (All these narratives have been adapted from Qurṭubī).

وَمَايُهْلِكُنَآ اِلَّا الدَّهْرُ "...and nothing destroys us except time...(45:24)" The word *dahr* means 'time from the beginning of the world to its end'. It also refers to 'a very long period of time'. The atheists alleged that their life and death have nothing to do with Divine will and command. They happen under natural causes. Death is a process which they say they experience when their human limbs, organs and abilities diminish on account of constant use and, with the passage of time, the matter becomes dissolved and is destroyed; and that this is the be-all and end-all of human existence, there being no life hereafter. Likewise, life has nothing to do with Divine will and command. Life too, like death, happens under movement of material causes .

Reviling Time Is Inappropriate

Atheists believed that 'Time' is the cause of life, death, vicissitudes of conditions and adversities, and also the cause of the revolution of the entire universe. Every happening used to be attributed to 'Time' by them as indicated in this verse, whereas the fact is that everything happens with the Divine will and volition. Therefore, authentic Traditions prohibit reviling of time. The power which the unbelievers describe as 'time' is in fact the Divine power. When people curse or revile time for their

adversities, they are in fact directing their reproach to Allah. The Messenger of Allah said: "Do not revile time because time actually is Allah." The ignorant who claim that a particular work was done by time is actually the work of Divine power - time is nothing. It does not necessarily follow from this proposition that *ad-dahr* is one of the names of Allah. Here Allah is referred to as ad-dahr metaphorically or figuratively.

Verses 27 - 37

وَلِلّٰهِ مُلْكُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ ؕ وَيَوْمَ تَقُوْمُ السَّاعَةُ يَوْمَئِذٍ يَّخْسَرُ
الْمُبْطِلُوْنَ ﴿٢٧﴾ وَتَرٰى كُلَّ اُمَّةٍ جَاثِيَةً ۫ كُلُّ اُمَّةٍ تُدْعٰۤى اِلٰى كِتٰبِهَا ؕ
اَلْيَوْمَ تُجْزَوْنَ مَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿٢٨﴾ هٰذَا كِتٰبُنَا يَنْطِقُ عَلَيْكُمْ
بِالْحَقِّ ؕ اِنَّا كُنَّا نَسْتَنْسِخُ مَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿٢٩﴾ فَاَمَّا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا
وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ فَيُدْخِلُهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ فِيْ رَحْمَتِهٖ ؕ ذٰلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ
الْمُبِيْنُ ﴿٣٠﴾ وَ اَمَّا الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا ۫ اَفَلَمْ تَكُنْ اٰيٰتِيْ تُتْلٰى عَلَيْكُمْ
فَاسْتَكْبَرْتُمْ وَكُنْتُمْ قَوْمًا مُّجْرِمِيْنَ ﴿٣١﴾ وَاِذَا قِيْلَ اِنَّ وَعْدَ اللّٰهِ حَقٌّ
وَّالسَّاعَةُ لَا رَيْبَ فِيْهَا قُلْتُمْ مَّا نَدْرِيْ مَا السَّاعَةُ ۙ اِنْ نَّظُنُّ اِلَّا ظَنًّا وَّمَا
نَحْنُ بِمُسْتَيْقِنِيْنَ ﴿٣٢﴾ وَبَدَا لَهُمْ سَيِّاٰتُ مَا عَمِلُوْا وَحَاقَ بِهِمْ
مَّا كَانُوْا بِهٖ يَسْتَهْزِءُوْنَ ﴿٣٣﴾ وَقِيْلَ الْيَوْمَ نَنْسٰىكُمْ كَمَا نَسِيْتُمْ لِقَآءَ
يَوْمِكُمْ هٰذَا وَمَاْوٰىكُمُ النَّارُ وَمَا لَكُمْ مِّنْ نّٰصِرِيْنَ ﴿٣٤﴾ ذٰلِكُمْ
بِاَنَّكُمُ اتَّخَذْتُمْ اٰيٰتِ اللّٰهِ هُزُوًا وَّغَرَّتْكُمُ الْحَيٰوةُ الدُّنْيَا ۚ فَالْيَوْمَ
لَا يُخْرَجُوْنَ مِنْهَا وَلَا هُمْ يُسْتَعْتَبُوْنَ ﴿٣٥﴾ فَلِلّٰهِ الْحَمْدُ رَبِّ
السَّمٰوٰتِ وَرَبِّ الْاَرْضِ رَبِّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿٣٦﴾ وَلَهُ الْكِبْرِيَآءُ فِي
السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ ۪ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيْزُ الْحَكِيْمُ ﴿٣٧﴾

And to Allah belongs the kingdom of the heavens and the earth. And the day the Hour will take place, the adherents of falsehood shall lose. [27] And you will see

every community kneeling down. Every community will be called to its Book (of record). Today you will be recompensed for what you used to do. [28] This is Our book that speaks against you with truth. We used to get recorded all that you used to do. [29] Then, as for those who believed and did righteous deeds, their Lord will admit them to His mercy. That is indeed the achievement, visible to all. [30] And as to those who disbelieved, (it will be said to them,) " Had My verses not been recited to you? But you showed arrogance, and you were a guilty people. [31] And when it was said to you that Allah's promise is true and there is no doubt in the (arrival of the) Hour, you used to say, 'We do not know what the Hour is. We do not think (about it) but as an assumption, and we are not sure.'" [32] And revealed to them will be the evils of what they did, and encircled they will be by what they used to ridicule. [33] And it will be said, "Today We will forget you like you forgot facing this your day, and your abode is the Fire, and for you there are no helpers at all. [34] That is because you took Allah's verses as a laughing stock, and the worldly life deceived you." So today they will neither be brought out of it, nor will they be asked to repent. [35] So, to Allah belongs all praise, who is the Lord of the heavens and the earth, the Lord of the worlds. [36] And to Him belongs majesty in the heavens and the earth. And He is the Mighty, the Wise. [37]

Commentary

وَتَرَىٰ كُلَّ أُمَّةٍ جَاثِيَةً ("And you will see every community kneeling down... 45:28"). The word *jāthiyah* is derived from جُثُو *juthuww*. It means 'to sit with knees upon the ground'. Sayyidnā Sufyān ﷺ says that the word means 'to sit in such a way that only the knees and the toes of the feet rest on the ground'. The latter type of sitting will be on account of awe, horror and fear. The words, كُلَّ أُمَّة "every community" means that horrors of Resurrection will be felt by all on the plain - believers, non-believers, and righteous and unrighteous, all of them. There are other verses and traditions that exclude the Prophets and the righteous from experiencing the horrors of the Plains of Resurrection. The present verse is not in conflict with them. It is possible that the Prophets and the righteous will experience the horrors of the Plains of Resurrection for a short period of time - the period of time will be so short as if it never existed. It is also possible that the word *kull* is not used in the sense of "every" but in the

sense of 'most' - as is used occasionally. From this point of view, the phrase would mean not all the people on the Plain of Resurrection but 'most people' will experience horror, thus the prophets and the righteous are excluded. Some of the scholars take the position that the word *jathiyah* means 'to sit like the sitting posture in salah'. If this be taken for granted, the difficulty automatically disappears because such a sitting is not out of fear or horror. It is out of respect and honour.

كُلُّ أُمَّةٍ تُدْعَىٰ إِلَىٰ كِتٰبِهَا "...Every community will be called to its book (of record)...45:28". The word *kitāb*, according to most commentators, refers to 'book of record' which the angels have been writing in the world. The record-books will be thrown on the Plains of Resurrection and each one will receive his respective record-book and it will be said to him: اِقْرَاْ كِتَابَكَ كَفٰى بِنَفْسِكَ الْيَوْمَ عَلَيْكَ حَسِيْبًا "Read your book. This day you yourself are enough to take your own account. (17:14)" The phrase 'Calling towards the record-books' purports to say that they will have to render an account of their deeds before Allah in the next life.

Alhamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Aljāthiyah
Ends here

Sūrah Al-Aḥqāf

The Sand-dunes

Sūrah Al-Aḥkāf is Makkī. It has 35 Verses and 4 Sections

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 6

حٰمٓ ﴿١﴾ تَنْزِيْلُ الْكِتٰبِ مِنَ اللّٰهِ الْعَزِيْزِ الْحَكِيْمِ ﴿٢﴾ مَا خَلَقْنَا
السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَآ اِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ وَاَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى ؕ وَالَّذِيْنَ
كَفَرُوْا عَمَّآ اُنْذِرُوْا مُعْرِضُوْنَ ﴿٣﴾ قُلْ اَرَءَيْتُمْ مَّا تَدْعُوْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِ
اللّٰهِ اَرُوْنِيْ مَاذَا خَلَقُوْا مِنَ الْاَرْضِ اَمْ لَهُمْ شِرْكٌ فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ ؕ
اِيْتُوْنِيْ بِكِتٰبٍ مِّنْ قَبْلِ هٰذَآ اَوْ اَثٰرَةٍ مِّنْ عِلْمٍ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ صٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿٤﴾
وَمَنْ اَضَلُّ مِمَّنْ يَّدْعُوْا مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ مَنْ لَّا يَسْتَجِيْبُ لَهٗٓ اِلٰى يَوْمِ
الْقِيٰمَةِ وَهُمْ عَنْ دُعَآئِهِمْ غٰفِلُوْنَ ﴿٥﴾ وَاِذَا حُشِرَ النَّاسُ كَانُوْا لَهُمْ
اَعْدَآءً وَّكَانُوْا بِعِبَادَتِهِمْ كٰفِرِيْنَ ﴿٦﴾

Ḥā Mīm. [1] This is the revelation of the book from Allah, the Mighty, the Wise. [2] We did not create the heavens and the earth but with true purpose and for a specified term. And those who disbelieve are averse to what they are warned of. [3] Say, "Tell me about those whom you invoke instead of Allah, (and) show me what they have created of the earth; Or have they a share in (the creation of) the heavens? Bring to me a book

(revealed) before this one, or a trace of knowledge, if you are truthful. [4] **And who is more astray than him who invokes, instead of Allah, such a one as will not respond to him until the Day of Judgement; and they are totally unaware of their prayers,** [5] **and when people will be assembled (on the Day of Judgment), they will be enemies to them, and will refuse even their having worshipped them.** [6]

Commentary

قُلْ اَرَءَيْتُمْ مَّا تَدْعُوْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ (Say, "Tell me about those whom you invoke instead of Allah,...46:4) In these verses, the claim of the polytheists about the existence of some other gods has been refuted by demanding a proof to substantiate this claim, because no claim can be accepted, neither rationally nor according to the religious principles, unless it is proved by concrete evidences to support it. Then dealing with all possible types of arguments, it has been proved that they do not have any evidence or proof in their favor, and that their insisting on such a baseless claim is nothing but deviation from the truth. The arguments have been classified by these verses in three types. One is a rational argument. Verse 4 negates any argument of this type in their favor by saying, اَرُوْنِیْ مَاذَا خَلَقُوْا مِنَ الْاَرْضِ اَمْ لَهُمْ شِرْكٌ فِی السَّمٰوٰتِ "Show me what they have created of the earth; Or have they a share in (the creation of) the heavens?" (46:4)

The second type of argument is that which refers to and relies on the statement of an authority. It is obvious that, in any matter concerning Allah, no one can be an authority except Allah Himself, and His statements can be proved either by the divine books, like Torah, Injīl or Qur'ān, or by the sayings of the prophets sent by Him. Negation of the first type of authority in their case is established by saying, اِیْتُوْنِیْ بِکِتٰبٍ مِّنْ قَبْلِ هٰذَا "Bring to me a book (revealed) before this one, (46:4)" meaning that if you have any proof of this type, then bring the book revealed before the Qur'ān which allows idol-worship. And the second type of argument (that may be based on the saying of a prophet) has been negated by saying, اَوْ اَثٰرَةٍ مِّنْ عِلْمٍ "or a trace of knowledge," (46:4) meaning thereby that if you cannot bring any revealed book to prove the validity of idol-worship, then at least put forward any authentic saying of any prophet which proves your contention. And if you can do neither, then your words and deeds are totally misguided.

The original word used in the text is أَثَرَةٍ *'athārah'* which is an infinitive in the sense of 'reporting' and has been explained by 'Ikrimah and Muqātil to mean a dictum of a prophet.

The explanation given above is taken from the Tafsīr of Qurṭubī, and this is the explanation accepted by most exegetes. There are some other views in the interpretation of this verse, but they are neither well-established, nor in full harmony with the textual structure. Therefore, they are not adopted by the majority of the exegetes. (Allah knows best)

Verses 7 - 10

وَإِذَا تُتْلٰى عَلَيْهِمْ اٰيٰتُنَا بَيِّنٰتٍ قَالَ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا لِلْحَقِّ لَمَّا جَآءَهُمْ
هٰذَا سِحْرٌ مُّبِيْنٌ ﴿۷﴾ اَمْ يَقُوْلُوْنَ افْتَرٰىهُ ط قُلْ اِنِ افْتَرَيْتُهٗ فَلَا تَمْلِكُوْنَ
لِيْ مِنَ اللّٰهِ شَيْئًا ط هُوَ اَعْلَمُ بِمَا تُفِيْضُوْنَ فِيْهِ ط كَفٰى بِهٖ شَهِيْدًا بَيْنِيْ
وَبَيْنَكُمْ ط وَهُوَ الْغَفُوْرُ الرَّحِيْمُ ﴿۸﴾ قُلْ مَا كُنْتُ بِدْعًا مِّنَ الرُّسُلِ
وَمَآ اَدْرِيْ مَا يُفْعَلُ بِيْ وَلَا بِكُمْ ط اِنْ اَتَّبِعُ اِلَّا مَا يُوْحٰٓى اِلَيَّ وَمَآ اَنَا اِلَّا
نَذِيْرٌ مُّبِيْنٌ ﴿۹﴾ قُلْ اَرَءَيْتُمْ اِنْ كَانَ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللّٰهِ وَكَفَرْتُمْ بِهٖ وَشَهِدَ
شَاهِدٌ مِّنْۢ بَنِيْٓ اِسْرَآءِيْلَ عَلٰى مِثْلِهٖ فَاٰمَنَ وَاسْتَكْبَرْتُمْ ط اِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَا
يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿۱۰﴾

And when Our verses are recited to them in all their clarity, the disbelievers say about the truth when it comes to them, "This is an open magic." [7] Is it that they, rather, say, "He has forged it (the Qur'ān)"? Say, "If I have forged it, then you do not have any power to help me against Allah. He is well aware of that in which you indulge. He is enough as a witness between me and you, and He is the Most-Forgiving, the Very-Merciful." [8] Say, "I am not something unprecedented among the messengers, and I do not know what will be done to me or to you. I do not follow anything but what is revealed to me, and I am only a clear warner. [9] Say, "Tell me, If it (the Qur'ān) is from Allah and you reject it, and a

witness from the children of Isrā'īl testifies about something similar to it and comes to believe (in it), while you persist in your arrogance, (then, how unjust you are!) Surely, Allah does not give guidance to the unjust people. [10]

Commentary

وَمَآ اَدْرِیْ مَایُفْعَلُ بِیْ وَلَابِکُمْ ؕ اِنْ اَتَّبِعُ اِلَّا مَا یُوْحٰٓی اِلَیَّ (and I do not know what will be done to me or to you. I do not follow anything but what is revealed to me - 46:9) The sentence, "I do not follow anything but what is revealed to me," has been used here as an 'exception' to the previous sentence, meaning thereby that I do not know anything except what is revealed to me through *waḥy*. The gist of the explanation given to this verse by Imām Ḍaḥḥāk رحمه الله تعالى, is that the knowledge of some unseen things can be obtained by the Holy Prophet ﷺ only through *waḥy*, and he does not have any knowledge about those unseen things which were not revealed to him through *waḥy*, be they about his own self, about the believers and disbelievers among his people, or about matters pertaining to this world or to the Hereafter. Whatever the Holy Prophet ﷺ has said about the unseen things is obtained through *waḥy*. The noble Qur'ān has declared that the Holy Prophet ﷺ was blessed by the knowledge of innumerable things from the Unseen (*ghaib*), but all this knowledge was given to him by the divine revelation. This is exactly what the Holy Qur'ān means by saying,

تِلْکَ مِنْ اَنْبَآءِ الْغَیْبِ نُوْحِیْهَآ اِلَیْکَ

"These are some reports from the unseen (events) which We reveal to you." (11: 49)

Details of matters relating to the Hereafter, Hell, Paradise, accountability, reward and punishment are given in the Holy Qur'ān itself, and many details of certain future events that had to take place in this world are given in authentic *aḥādīth* reported from the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Thus the substance of the present verse is simply that the knowledge of the Holy Prophet about the Unseen is not all-encompassing as is that of Allah Almighty, nor is it independently obtained; he simply reproduces whatever Allah Almighty tells him through *waḥy*.

After having reproduced this explanation, the author of Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī says,

"It is my belief that the Holy Prophet ﷺ did not leave this world until he was blessed by *waḥy* with such a knowledge about Allah Ta'ālā, His attributes and about all those things the knowledge of which could be meritorious that no other in the whole universe has ever been blessed with. But I do not believe that unawareness about trivial worldly affairs like the acts of some particular individuals and what they do at their homes and what happens to them one day or the other can in any way reduce his excellence."

Dictate of etiquette regarding the knowledge of the Holy Prophet ﷺ about unseen matters

Respect for the Holy Prophet ﷺ demands that one should not say that he did not know the Unseen; rather one should say that Allah Ta'ālā had given such vast knowledge of unseen matters to him as was not given to any other prophet.

The explanation given by some exegetes that the negation in this verse is only about the unseen affairs pertaining to this world, and not about the Hereafter (as stated by Qurṭubī) is probably because they have not taken the words, "I do not follow anything but what is revealed to me," in the sense of an exception to the previous sentence; hence the negation of the knowledge of unseen things has been made specific to the affairs of this world, because the Holy Prophet ﷺ has told very clearly about the Hereafter that the Mu'min would go to Paradise, and the 'kafir' would go to Hell.

وَشَهِدَ شَاهِدٌ مِّنْۢ بَنِیٓ اِسْرَآءِیْلَ عَلٰی مِثْلِهٖ فَاٰمَنَ وَاسْتَكْبَرْتُمْ (and a witness from the children of Isra'il testifies about something similar to it and comes to believe in it while you persist in your arrogance, [then, how unjust you are!]....- 46:10) The subject of this verse is almost the same as of the verse of the last chapter of Sūrah As-Shu'ara'

اَوَلَمْ یَكُنْ لَّهُمْ اٰیَةً اَنْ یَّعْلَمَهٗ عُلَمٰٓؤُا بَنِیٓ اِسْرَآءِیْلَ

Is it not a proof for them that the knowledgeable of the children of Isrā'īl recognize him (the Prophet)? (26: 197)

The gist is that these ignorant Jews and Christians who deny the messengership of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and disbelieve the Qur'ān are ignorant of their own books, because many scholars of Banī Isrā'īl having found the prophethood of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and its signs mentioned in

their books and having witnessed those signs, have come to believe in him. Even the testimony of their own scholars is not enough for these ignorant people.

Verse 10 of this Sūrah states that their falsification of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and their claim about the Qur'ān that it is a forgery, is baseless firstly because, as mentioned in verse 8, if anyone lays a false claim to prophethood, he has to be eliminated by the divine punishment right in this world, so that the common people may be saved from his fraudulent claims, Secondly, if they do not accept this argument, they should, at least, not overlook the possibility that if his claim is correct, and this book is actually from Allah Ta'ālā, and they continue to persist in their arrogance, denial and disbelief, specially when one of their own learned scholar from Banī Isrā'īl testifies the Book to be from Allah, and comes to believe in it, then what will be their end and how severe a punishment will they deserve?

This verse does not name any particular scholar of Banī Isrā'iil, nor does it specify whether the testimony had already been given before this verse was revealed, or it would come afterwards. It, in effect, sounds a warning that should such a situation have already arisen or if it should arise in future, one should worry about saving one's skin. Therefore, understanding this verse is not dependent upon the determination of a particular testifier; rather all the Jews and Christians who embraced Islam, of which Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Salām is more prominent, are included herein, although he embraced Islam in Madīnah, while this verse was revealed in Makkah. (Ibn Kathīr)

The statement by Sayyidnā Sa'd ؓ reported in some narrations of Bukhārī, Muslim and Nasa'ī, that this verse was revealed about Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Salām ؓ and the same statement from Ibn 'Abbās ؓ, Mujahid , Ḍaḥḥāk, Qatādah ؓ, etc. is not against this verse being Makki, as in this case, it will be a prophecy for the future. (Ibn Kathīr)

Verses 11 - 12

وَقَالَ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا لِلَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا لَوْ كَانَ خَيْرًا مَّا سَبَقُوْنَآ اِلَيْهِ ط وَاِذْ لَمْ
يَهْتَدُوْا بِهٖ فَسَيَقُوْلُوْنَ هٰذَآ اِفْكٌ قَدِيْمٌ ﴿١١﴾ وَمِنْ قَبْلِهٖ كِتٰبُ مُوْسٰٓى

إِمَامًا وَّرَحْمَةً ۚ وَهٰذَا كِتٰبٌ مُّصَدِّقٌ لِّسَانًا عَرَبِيًّا لِّيُنْذِرَ الَّذِيْنَ ظَلَمُوْا ۖ وَبُشْرٰى لِلْمُحْسِنِيْنَ ﴿١٢﴾

And the disbelievers say about the believers, "Had it (Islamic faith) been a good thing, these (weak and poor) people would not have preceded us (in proceeding) towards it." And since they did not accept guidance through it (the Qur'ān), they will say, "This is a classical lie." [11] **And before this there was the Book of Mūsā, a guide and a mercy. And this is a Book confirming (it) in Arabic tongue, that it may warn the wrongdoers and give good news to those who are good in deeds.** [12]

Commentary

لَوْ كَانَ خَيْرًا مَّا سَبَقُوْنَآ اِلَيْهِ (Had it [Islamic faith] been a good thing, these [weak and poor] people would not have preceded us [in proceeding] towards it._ 46:11) Arrogance and pride pervert the human intellect also. An arrogant person considers his own opinions and deeds to be the criteria for determining right and wrong, good and bad. If he does not like anything, no matter how well it is believed to be by others, he considers all those people to be stupid, while he himself is stupid. The arrogance and pride of the infidels was of this very kind, and since they did not like Islamic faith, they used to say about it's lovers that had it been a good thing, they themselves would have been the first to adopt it, and that one should not trust the choice of these poor people.

Ibn Mundhir رحمه الله تعالى etc., have reproduced a narration according to which this verse was revealed about a slave-girl of Sayyidnā 'Umar Ibn Khaṭṭāb ﷺ named Zunairah who had embraced Islam when he was still a disbeliever. She used to be beaten up and threatened by him, so that she might give up Islam somehow or the other, and the kuffar of Quraish used to say that had Islamic faith been a good thing, such a worthless woman as Zunairah would not have preceded us in embracing it. (Maẓharī)

وَمِنْ قَبْلِهٖ كِتٰبُ مُوْسٰٓى اِمَامًا وَّرَحْمَةً (And before this, there was the Book of Mūsā, a guide and a mercy. - 46:12) This verse, for one thing, gives proof of the statement mentioned in verse 9 that the Holy Prophet ﷺ is not an unprecedented messenger and Qur'ān is not a singular divine Book which

may create doubts in the minds. Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام came before him ﷺ as a messenger, and Torah was revealed to him which is accepted by all these Jews and Christians. Secondly, it supports the verse 10 above, because Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام and Torah themselves are witnesses to the Holy Prophet ﷺ being the messenger of Allah and the Qur'ān being Allah's Book.

Verses 13 - 20

إِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ قَالُوْا رَبُّنَا اللّٰهُ ثُمَّ اسْتَقَامُوْا فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ
يَحْزَنُوْنَ ﴿١٣﴾ اُولٰٓئِكَ اَصْحٰبُ الْجَنَّةِ خٰلِدِيْنَ فِيْهَا ۚ جَزَآءًۢ بِمَا
كَانُوْا يَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿١٤﴾ وَوَصَّيْنَا الْاِنْسَانَ بِوَالِدَيْهِ اِحْسٰنًا ۭ حَمَلَتْهُ اُمُّهٗ
كُرْهًا وَّ وَضَعَتْهُ كُرْهًا ۭ وَحَمْلُهٗ وَفِصٰلُهٗ ثَلٰثُوْنَ شَهْرًا ۭ حَتّٰٓى اِذَا بَلَغَ
اَشُدَّهٗ وَبَلَغَ اَرْبَعِيْنَ سَنَةً ۙ قَالَ رَبِّ اَوْزِعْنِيْٓ اَنْ اَشْكُرَ نِعْمَتَكَ الَّتِيْٓ
اَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيَّ وَعَلٰى وَالِدَيَّ وَاَنْ اَعْمَلَ صَالِحًا تَرْضٰىهُ وَاَصْلِحْ لِيْ
فِيْ ذُرِّيَّتِيْ ۚ اِنِّيْ تُبْتُ اِلَيْكَ وَاِنِّيْ مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِيْنَ ﴿١٥﴾ اُولٰٓئِكَ
الَّذِيْنَ نَتَقَبَّلُ عَنْهُمْ اَحْسَنَ مَا عَمِلُوْا وَنَتَجَاوَزُ عَنْ سَيِّاٰتِهِمْ فِيْٓ
اَصْحٰبِ الْجَنَّةِ ۭ وَعْدَ الصِّدْقِ الَّذِيْ كَانُوْا يُوْعَدُوْنَ ﴿١٦﴾ وَالَّذِيْ
قَالَ لِوَالِدَيْهِ اُفٍّ لَّكُمَآ اَتَعِدٰنِنِيْٓ اَنْ اُخْرَجَ وَقَدْ خَلَتِ الْقُرُوْنُ مِنْ
قَبْلِيْ ۚ وَهُمَا يَسْتَغِيْثٰنِ اللّٰهَ وَيْلَكَ اٰمِنْ ڰ اِنَّ وَعْدَ اللّٰهِ حَقٌّ ښ
فَيَقُوْلُ مَا هٰذَآ اِلَّآ اَسَاطِيْرُ الْاَوَّلِيْنَ ﴿١٧﴾ اُولٰٓئِكَ الَّذِيْنَ حَقَّ عَلَيْهِمُ
الْقَوْلُ فِيْٓ اُمَمٍ قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ مِّنَ الْجِنِّ وَالْاِنْسِ ۭ اِنَّهُمْ كَانُوْا
خٰسِرِيْنَ ﴿١٨﴾ وَلِكُلٍّ دَرَجٰتٌ مِّمَّا عَمِلُوْا وَلِيُوَفِّيَهُمْ اَعْمَالَهُمْ وَهُمْ
لَا يُظْلَمُوْنَ ﴿١٩﴾ وَيَوْمَ يُعْرَضُ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا عَلَى النَّارِ ۭ اَذْهَبْتُمْ
طَيِّبٰتِكُمْ فِيْ حَيَاتِكُمُ الدُّنْيَا وَاسْتَمْتَعْتُمْ بِهَا ۚ فَالْيَوْمَ تُجْزَوْنَ عَذَابَ

الْهُوْنِ بِمَا كُنتُمْ تَسْتَكْبِرُوْنَ فِي الْأَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ وَبِمَا كُنتُمْ
تَفْسُقُوْنَ ﴿٢٠﴾

Surely, those who said, "Our Lord is Allah" then stayed firm, for them, there is no fear, nor shall they grieve. [13] Those are the people of Paradise, living there forever, as a reward for what they used to do. [14] And We have enjoined upon man to do good to his parents. His mother carried him with toil and delivered him with toil. And his carrying and his weaning is (in) thirty months, until when he attains his maturity, and reaches forty years, he says, "My Lord, grant me that I offer gratitude for the favor You have bestowed upon me and upon my parents, and that I do righteous deeds that You like. And grant for my benefit goodness in my progeny. Of course, I repent to you, and truly I am one of those who submit to You." [15] Such are the people from whom We accept the best of what they did, and overlook their evils, (so as they will be) among the people of the Paradise according to the true promise that was made to them. [16] And (Contrary to this is the case of) the one who said to his parents, "Fie upon you both! Do you promise to me that I shall be brought out (from the grave), while generations have passed before me?" And they (the parents) were crying for Allah's help, (and saying to their son,) "Woe to you. Believe. Allah's promise is certainly true." Then he says, "This is nothing but the tales of the ancients." [17] Such are the people on whom the word (of punishment) has come true along with the communities of the Jinn and the humans that have passed before them. Surely they were losers. [18] And for each (of these two groups) there are (different) ranks, because of what they did, and so that He may repay them in full for their deeds, and they will not be wronged. [19] And the day the disbelievers will be presented before the Fire, (it will be said to them,) " You have consumed your good things in your worldly life, and have enjoyed them. So, today you will be punished with the torment of humiliation for the arrogance you used to show on earth having no right (to do so), and for the sins you used to commit. [20]

Commentary

The first two of the above verses are a complement to the previous

verses which announce punishment for the unjust, and glad tidings of success and reward for the virtuous Muslims. In the first verse إِنَّ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا رَبُّنَا اللَّهُ ثُمَّ اسْتَقَامُوا "Surely, those who said, 'Our Lord is Allah' then stayed firm, (46:13)" all the basic faith and virtuous deeds required by Islam have been comprehensively referred to with great eloquence. The admission that رَبُّنَا اللَّهُ "Our Lord is Allah." is the whole of faith, and staying firm in it includes holding on to it till death, as well as carrying out all its obligations. The meaning and importance of *istiqamah* ('Staying firm), have been explained in detail in the commentary of Sūrah Ḥā Mīm As-Sajdah (41:30). In this verse here, those who embrace faith and remain steadfast to it are being promised freedom from anxiety and suffering in future, and dispelling of their grief and sorrow over past sufferings. The following verse gives glad tidings of the permanence and continuity of this matchless comfort. In the four verses which follow, man is being directed to behave beautifully with his parents, and is being censured for ill-behaviour towards them; and in this context, the kindness of the parents to him and the parents' bearing hard labor and toiling for their children have been mentioned, and then man has been advised to repent and turn towards Allah Ta'ālā when he gets older. The connection between these verses and the earlier ones, according to Ibn Kathīr, is that the usual style of the Holy Qur'ān is to instruct man to behave beautifully, to serve and to obey his parents along with the call to obey and worship Allah Almighty. Many verses of the Holy Qur'ān in various Sūrahs bear witness to this style. Here also, in the same way, mention has been made of beautiful behaviour for parents alongwith the call to believe in the Oneness of Allah Ta'ālā. And Qurṭubī, with reference to Qushairi has stated the connection to be that there is a kind of solace in it for the Holy Prophet ﷺ that he should continue calling people towards faith and '*tauḥīd*' (the Oneness of Allah) and should not be disheartened if some people do not accept his invitation, because men, by nature, are of diverse characteristics, and some of them do not refrain even from ill-treatment to their parents. (Allah knows best)

In any case, the real subject of these four verses is to instruct man to behave beautifully with one's parents, and in that context there are other instructions also. Although some narrations of *ḥadīth* indicate that these verses were revealed about Sayyidnā Abū Bakr ؓ, it is obvious that even if any verse of the Qur'ān is revealed about any particular person or about any particular incident, the rule laid down thereby remains

generally applicable to all. Therefore, even if the verse was revealed about Sayyidnā Abū Bakr ﷺ, its application is general, regardless of some specifications of age etc. that may appear particular to him.

وَوَصَّيْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ بِوَالِدَيْهِ إِحْسَانًا (And We have enjoined upon man to do good to his parents.- 46:15) The word *wasiyyah* used in the text means 'emphatic order' and *iḥsān* means 'doing good' or 'behaving beautifully' which includes service, obedience, respect and reverence.

حَمَلَتْهُ أُمُّهُ كُرْهًا وَّ وَضَعَتْهُ كُرْهًا (His mother carried him with toil and delivered him with toil.- 46:15) The word كُرْه *kurh* means the toil that one has to endure for some reason, while كَرْه *karh* means the toil one has to undertake under compulsion from someone else. This sentence puts emphasis on the instruction given in the previous sentence for doing good to the parents, and spells out one of the reasons for it. The verse addresses everyone and draws his attention to the fact that parents have gone through hardships and have endured toil for his sake, right from his birth up to his youth. The toil and labor of the mother, specially, is much more prominent. That is why only toil of mother has been stated here by reminding that she carries the baby inside her womb during pregnancy of nine long months, during which she had to bear all kinds of hardship and suffering, and then she endures extreme pain during delivery.

Mother has more rights than father

Although the first part of this verse is a command to do good to both the parents, the second sentence refers only to the hardships suffered by the mother, because they are unavoidable, and no child can be born without them. Every mother has to go through the problems of pregnancy and severe pains of delivery. As against this, it is not necessary for a father that he suffers any hardship in bringing up and educating the child, if he can afford to pay somebody else for these services. That is why the Holy Prophet ﷺ has given more rights to the mother than anybody else. According to a *ḥadīth*, He has said,

صِلْ أُمَّکَ ثُمَّ أُمَّکَ ثُمَّ أُمَّکَ ثُمَّ اَبَاکَ ثُمَّ اَدْنَاکَ فَاَدْنَاکَ

"Do good to and serve your mother, then your mother, then your mother, then your father, then the near relatives and then those who come after them." (Maẓharī)

وَحَمْلُهُ وَفِصٰلُهُ ثَلٰثُوْنَ شَهْرًا (And his carrying and his weaning is in thirty

months - 46:15). This sentence too describes the hardships suffered by mother for her baby. It points out that even after suffering hardships during the pregnancy and the severe labor pains, the mother does not get respite from toils, because the natural food of the infant is in her breasts, and she has to suckle the infant.

This verse states that the total period of pregnancy and then of weaning is thirty months, Sayyidnā 'Alī ﷺ has deduced from this verse that the minimum period of pregnancy is six months, because the Holy Qur'ān has determined the maximum weaning period as two complete years in another verse which says,

وَالْوَالِدَاتُ يُرْضِعْنَ اَوْلَادَهُنَّ حَوْلَيْنِ كَامِلَيْنِ

And mothers suckle their children for full two years; it is for one who wants to complete (the period of) suckling. (2: 233)

The total period of pregnancy and suckling has been mentioned in the verse under discussion (46:15) as thirty months. If the maximum period of suckling, that is twenty four months according to the verse 2:233 cited above, is deducted from thirty months, the balance is no more than six months which has been taken as the minimum period of pregnancy.

It is narrated that during the period of Sayyidnā 'Uthmān ﷺ, a woman gave birth to a child in six months, as against the normal period of nine months, or at least seven months. Sayyidnā 'Uthmān ﷺ decided this to be the case of an illegitimate birth and gave orders for punishment. When Sayyidnā 'Alī ﷺ came to know the incident, he advised Sayyidnā 'Uthmān ﷺ against the decision, and argued that the minimum period of pregnancy is six months as deduced from the verses mentioned above. Sayyidnā 'Uthmān ﷺ accepted his argument and cancelled his order. (Qurṭubī)

That is why all the jurists of the Ummah are unanimous on the point that the minimum period of pregnancy can be six months, while they differ about the maximum period of pregnancy, because the Holy Qur'ān has not given any ruling about it.

Conclusion

This verse has defined the minimum period of pregnancy to be six months; a perfect and sound baby cannot be born in a lesser period; the

maximum period has not been defined, as it may vary with individuals. Similarly, the maximum period for suckling has been defined to be two years; the minimum period has not been defined, because some women do not produce any milk at all; some have their milk dried up within few months, and some babies are not very fond of mother's milk, or it is harmful for them, and they are fed from other sources.

Different views of Jurists about maximum period of pregnancy and maximum period of suckling

The great Imam Abu Hanifah holds the maximum period of pregnancy to be two years. There are different narrations from Imām Mālik about the maximum period of pregnancy to be four, five or seven years, whereas Imām Shāfi'ī holds it to be four years, which is also the view of Imām Aḥmad, according to more recognized reports from him. (Maẓharī). The maximum suckling period, which governs the rules of fosterage, is two years according to the majority of the jurists. Imām Mālik, Shāfi'ī, Aḥmad Ibn Hanbal رحمهم الله تعالى and Abū Yūsuf and Muḥammad from the Ḥanafī school, are all unanimous on it, and this is also the dictum of Sayyidnā 'Umar and Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ from the Noble Companions. (Ad-Darqutani) Sayyidnā 'Alī ﷺ and Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd ﷺ also have the same standpoint. (Ibn Abī Shaibah). Only the great Imām Abū Ḥanīfah has been quoted as saying that a baby can be suckled up to two years and a half. But the correct meaning of this view according to the majority of the Ḥanafī school is that if the baby is weak and does not take any food except mother's milk even after attaining the age of two years, then it is permissible to suckle him for another six months, because it is agreed by all that feeding the baby with mother's milk after the suckling period is unlawful. However, the prevalent *fatwā* (religious verdict) of the Ḥanafī jurists is in accordance with the majority of Imams holding that if a child is suckled after the period of two years, it would not result in creating the relationship of fosterage. Maulānā Thanawi رحمه الله تعالى has opined in Bayān-ul-Qur'ān that although the fatwa is in accordance with the view of the majority, yet it is better to be careful in arranging marriage of someone who has been suckled within six months after two years, which means that fosterage relationship should be presumed, as a matter of precaution, even if a child is suckled within six months after reaching the age of two

years.

Some exegetes have tried to interpret the verse وَحَمْلُهٗ وَفِصٰلُهٗ ثَلٰثُوْنَ شَهْرًا (And his carrying and his weaning is [in] thirty months - 46:15) in a manner that it may support the view of Imām Abū Ḥanīfah that the suckling period is two years and a half. But it is not correct, because, as stated in Tafsīr Maẓharī, the noble companions Sayyidnā 'Alī ﷺ and Sayyidnā 'Uthmān ﷺ have determined the meaning of this verse that the period of thirty months comprises the minimum period of six months for pregnancy, and twenty-four months for suckling.

Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ has said that Qur'ān has determined the combined period for pregnancy and suckling to be thirty months without defining each period separately, because if a baby is born in the normal period of nine months, the suckling period of twenty-one months is adequate, and if the baby is born in seven months, then a suckling period of twenty-three months is required, and if a baby is born in six months only, then a suckling period of full two years is required. (Maẓharī)

حَتّٰٓى اِذَا بَلَغَ اَشُدَّهٗ وَبَلَغَ اَرْبَعِيْنَ سَنَةً (until when he attains his maturity and reaches forty years - 46:15). The lexical meaning of the word اَشُدّ 'ashudd (translated above as 'maturity') is 'stregnth'. The same word used in Sūrah al-An'am (6:152) has been explained to mean 'the age of puberty'. Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ has explained it to mean reaching the age of eighteen years.

In the present verse too, some exegetes have taken the word اَشُدّ *'ashudd'* to mean "the age of puberty", and then they have taken the following words, وَبَلَغَ اَرْبَعِيْنَ سَنَةً "and reaches forty years" as a separate stage in one's life, and not an explanation of 'maturity'. This is the view of Sha'bī and Ibn Zayd رحمه الله تعالى. But Ḥasan Baṣrī رحمه الله تعالى has held both the sentences to have the same meaning and 'reaching the age of forty years' to be the explanation of 'attaining maturity'. (Qurṭubī) Thus the sequence of the events mentioned in the verse is such that pregnancy has been mentioned first, then the delivery of the child, followed by the suckling period. The reference to the maturity after that means that the child lived, became mature in his physical and mental strength and reached the age of forty years. It was at that point that he was able to turn towards his Creator, and began to pray to Him:

رَبِّ اَوْزِعْنِيْٓ اَنْ اَشْكُرَ نِعْمَتَكَ الَّتِيْٓ اَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيَّ وَعَلٰي وَالِدَيَّ وَاَنْ اَعْمَلَ صَالِحًا تَرْضٰىهُ وَاَصْلِحْ لِيْ فِيْ ذُرِّيَّتِيْ ۚ اِنِّيْ تُبْتُ اِلَيْكَ وَاِنِّيْ مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِيْنَ

"My Lord, grant me that I offer gratitude for the favor You have bestowed upon me and upon my parents, and that I do righteous deeds that You like. And grant for my benefit goodness in my progeny. Of course, I repent to you, and truly I am one of those who submit to You." (46:15)

All this description is given by the Holy Qur'ān in past tenses and in a style indicating that this description relates to a particular person and a particular event that had already happened before the verse was revealed. That is why Tafsīr Maẓharī has opined that all these circumstances relate to Sayyidnā Abū Bakr ﷺ, which have been mentioned in a general form to induce other Muslims also to act in a similar manner. This view is supported by the narration of Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ reproduced by Qurṭubī. The gist of this narration is that when the Holy Prophet ﷺ traveled to Syria for trading financed by Sayyidah Khadijah رضی اللہ عنہا, he was twenty years old. Sayyidnā Abū Bakr ﷺ was with him, and he was eighteen years old, and had 'reached his maturity' in the words of the Holy Qur'ān. He witnessed such qualities of the Holy Prophet ﷺ in that journey that he became his ardent admirer, and started accompanying him everywhere even after returning from that journey. When the Holy Prophet ﷺ reached the age of forty years, and Allah Ta'ālā blessed him with prophethood, Sayyidnā Abū Bakr ﷺ was thirty-eight years old, and he became the first adult male to embrace Islam. When he became forty years old, he prayed to Allah as stated in this verse above; hence the words of the Holy Qur'ān: 'and reached forty years'. Allah Ta'ālā accepted his supplication and gave him *'taufīq'* (ability and willingness) to purchase and then set free nine slaves who had embraced Islam and were being tortured mercilessly by their masters.

Similarly his prayer "Grant for my benefit goodness in my progeny" was also accepted in that all his children embraced Islam. Of all the noble companions, only Sayyidnā Abū Bakr ﷺ has the distinction that he himself, his parents and his offspring, all embraced Islam and had the honor of being noble companions of the Holy Prophet ﷺ.

The question that arises here is that Abū Quḥāfah ﷺ, the father of Sayyidnā Abū Bakr ﷺ, embraced Islam after the conquest of Makkah,

while the whole of this Sūrah is Makki, so how was it appropriate for Sayyidnā Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه, to mention Allah's blessings upon his parents at that stage when his father had not embraced Islam? One answer is that some exegetes have held these verse to be Madani. Given this view, there is no room for any such question. But if the verse is taken to have been revealed in Makkah, the inclusion of his parents in this supplication of Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه was by way of praying that they should be blessed by Allah with Islam. (Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī) (1)

Although, according to this explanation, all these descriptions relate to Sayyidnā Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه, yet the instruction is general for all Muslims that when they reach the age of forty years, their care for the Hereafter should take precedence over all their activities; one ought to repent afresh for the past sins, and take all precautions to save oneself from sins in future, because the experience shows that the ethical manners and habits that one is accustomed to at the age of forty years become permanent in his character, and are not easily changed.

It is reported by Sayyidnā 'Uthmān رضي الله عنه that the Holy Prophet ﷺ has said that when a Mu'min reaches the age of forty years, Allah Ta'ālā becomes lenient in taking account of his deeds; at the age of sixty years Allah gives him *taufīq* of *inābah* (frequently turning) towards Himself; at the age of seventy years all heavenly beings start loving him; at the age of eighty years, Allah Ta'ālā lets his virtues stand, and sins erased; and at the age of ninety years, Allah Ta'ālā forgives all his sins - past and future, and authorizes him to plead for the forgiveness of his family members, and in the heavens it is written alongside his name that he is detained by Allah on earth. (Ibn Kathīr, Musnad of Aḥmad, etc.) It is obvious that all this is about a Mu'min who has lived his life avoiding sins and in accordance with the injunctions of 'Sharī'ah'.

Since Ibn Kathīr رحمه الله تعالى has adopted the first explanation, that the verse does not refer to any particular person, like Sayyidnā Abū Bakr

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[1] In order to understand this, one should recapitulate the words of the prayer under discussion. These are: "My Lord, grant me that I offer gratitude for the favor You have bestowed upon me and upon my parents." According to this explanation, the 'favor bestowed' on the parents of Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه would mean the mundane benefits they were enjoying. Sayyidnā Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه prayed that they should be granted *taufīq* to offer gratitude to Allah on these favors by embracing Islam. (Muhammad Taqi Usmanī)

ﷺ, but it is meant for a common people, the specific words, like 'until when he reached his maturity and attained the age of forty years" are all by way of example, wherein the instruction is being imparted that when one reaches the age of forty years, one should have due care for correcting himself and his family members, and his endeavor for the betterment of the Hereafter should take precedence over all his thoughts. (Allah knows best)

أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ نَتَقَبَّلُ عَنْهُمْ أَحْسَنَ مَا عَمِلُوا وَنَتَجَاوَزُ عَنْ سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ (Such are the people from whom we accept the best of what they did and overlook their evils.... - 46:16) This, too, is a general rule, and if the verse was revealed with reference to Sayyidnā Abu Bakr ﷺ, then he would be the first to be included in its generality. A quotation from Sayyidnā 'Alī ﷺ which is given below also indicates that sense of the verse is general. Ibn Kathīr has reported the narration of Muḥammad Ibn Ḥāṭib رحمه الله تعالىٰ that once he was with Sayyidnā 'Alī ﷺ along with some other persons who blamed Sayyidnā 'Uthmān ﷺ for some wrong-doings. Thereupon Sayyidnā 'Alī ﷺ said:

> كان عثمان رضى الله عنه من الّذين قال الله تعالىٰ فيهم أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ نَتَقَبَّلُ عَنْهُمْ أَحْسَنَ مَا عَمِلُوا وَنَتَجَاوَزُ عَنْ سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ فِي أَصْحَابِ الْجَنَّةِ وَعْدَ الصِّدْقِ الَّذِي كَانُوا يُوعَدُونَ، قال وَاللّٰه عثمان واصحاب عثمان رضى الله عنهم، قالها ثلاثا. (ابن كثير)
>
> ('Uthmān ﷺ was one of those people about whom Allah Ta'ālā has said: "Such are the people from whom We accept the best of what they did, and overlook their evils, (so they will be) among the people of Paradise according to the true promise that was made to them." (46:16) I swear by Allah that 'Uthmān ﷺ and his companions were examples of this verse." Sayyidna 'Alī ﷺ repeated this three times.

وَالَّذِي قَالَ لِوَالِدَيْهِ أُفٍّ لَّكُمَا (And, [contrary to this is the case of] the one who said to his parents, 'Fie upon you both!' - 46:17). The previous verse has laid down the order to serve and obey the parents; this verse announces punishment for one who maltreats his parents and is impertinent to them, specially when they are calling him towards Islam and virtuous deeds, because rejecting their call is a double sin. Ibn Kathīr has said that the verse is general and applies to anyone who maltreats his parents.

Marwan's saying, in one of his addresses, that this verse holds true for 'Abdur Raḥmān Ibn Abī Bakr ﷺ has been contradicted by Sayyidah

'Ā'ishah رضی اللہ عنہا, as narrated in Ṣaḥīḥ of Bukhārī. The fact of the matter is that the verse is general in sense, and there is no correct narration which states this verse to hold true for a particular person.

اَذۡهَبۡتُمۡ طَيِّبٰتِكُمۡ فِىۡ حَيَاتِكُمُ الدُّنۡيَا ("You have consumed your good things in your worldly life - 46:20), It means that the infidels will be told that they had already been awarded delights, luxuries and enjoyment in the worldly life for whatever good deeds they had done there; now there is nothing left for them in the Hereafter. It is known from this verse that the good deeds of disbelievers do not have any worth in the Hereafter due to lack of belief or faith, but Allah Ta'ālā compensates them in this world. The riches and wealth, honour and dignity, etc., which are enjoyed by disbelievers in this world are all recompense for their good deeds, benevolence, sympathy, truthfulness, etc. This rule does not apply to Mu'mins (believers) that if they get any delights, riches and wealth in this world, they would be deprived of their right in the Hereafter.

Incentive for avoiding worldly delights and luxuries

The punishment stated in this verse for the disbelievers is because of their being engrossed in worldly enjoyments. So, the Holy Prophet ﷺ, his noble companions ؓ and Tabi'īn رحمهم الله تعالىٰ had made it a habit to avoid worldly enjoyments, as is evident from their lives. The Holy Prophet ﷺ had charged Sayyidnā Mu'ādh ؓ, when sending him to Yemen, to keep on avoiding the luxuries of this world. Sayyidnā 'Alī ؓ has reported the Holy Prophet ﷺ saying that one who is happy with Allah Ta'ālā giving him scanty sustenance finds Allah Ta'ālā also happy at his meager deeds. (Maẓharī from al-Baghawī)

Verses 21- 28

وَاذۡكُرۡ اَخَا عَادٍ ؕ اِذۡ اَنۡذَرَ قَوۡمَهٗ بِالۡاَحۡقَافِ وَقَدۡ خَلَتِ النُّذُرُ مِنۡۢ بَيۡنِ
يَدَيۡهِ وَمِنۡ خَلۡفِهٖۤ اَلَّا تَعۡبُدُوۡۤا اِلَّا اللّٰهَ ؕ اِنِّىۡۤ اَخَافُ عَلَيۡكُمۡ عَذَابَ يَوۡمٍ
عَظِيۡمٍ ﴿۲۱﴾ قَالُوۡۤا اَجِئۡتَنَا لِتَاۡفِكَنَا عَنۡ اٰلِهَتِنَا ۚ فَاۡتِنَا بِمَا تَعِدُنَاۤ اِنۡ
كُنۡتَ مِنَ الصّٰدِقِيۡنَ ﴿۲۲﴾ قَالَ اِنَّمَا الۡعِلۡمُ عِنۡدَ اللّٰهِ ۖ وَاُبَلِّغُكُمۡ مَّاۤ
اُرۡسِلۡتُ بِهٖ وَلٰكِنِّىۡۤ اَرٰىكُمۡ قَوۡمًا تَجۡهَلُوۡنَ ﴿۲۳﴾ فَلَمَّا رَاَوۡهُ عَارِضًا

مُّسْتَقْبِلَ اَوْدِيَتِهِمْ لا قَالُوْا هٰذَا عَارِضٌ مُّمْطِرُنَا ط بَلْ هُوَ مَا اسْتَعْجَلْتُمْ
بِهٖ ط رِيْحٌ فِيْهَا عَذَابٌ اَلِيْمٌ ﴿٢٤﴾ تُدَمِّرُ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ ۢ بِاَمْرِ رَبِّهَا
فَاَصْبَحُوْا لَا يُرٰٓى اِلَّا مَسٰكِنُهُمْ ط كَذٰلِكَ نَجْزِي الْقَوْمَ الْمُجْرِمِيْنَ
﴿٢٥﴾ وَلَقَدْ مَكَّنّٰهُمْ فِيْمَآ اِنْ مَّكَّنّٰكُمْ فِيْهِ وَجَعَلْنَا لَهُمْ سَمْعًا
وَّاَبْصَارًا وَّاَفْئِدَةً ز صلے فَمَآ اَغْنٰى عَنْهُمْ سَمْعُهُمْ وَلَآ اَبْصَارُهُمْ وَلَا
اَفْئِدَتُهُمْ مِّنْ شَيْءٍ اِذْ كَانُوْا يَجْحَدُوْنَ بِاٰيٰتِ اللّٰهِ وَحَاقَ بِهِمْ
مَّا كَانُوْا بِهٖ يَسْتَهْزِءُوْنَ ﴿٢٦﴾ ع وَلَقَدْ اَهْلَكْنَا مَا حَوْلَكُمْ مِّنَ الْقُرٰى
وَصَرَّفْنَا الْاٰيٰتِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُوْنَ ﴿٢٧﴾ فَلَوْلَا نَصَرَهُمُ الَّذِيْنَ اتَّخَذُوْا
مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ قُرْبَانًا اٰلِهَةً ط بَلْ ضَلُّوْا عَنْهُمْ ج وَذٰلِكَ اِفْكُهُمْ وَمَا
كَانُوْا يَفْتَرُوْنَ ﴿٢٨﴾

And remember the brother of (the nation of) 'Ād, when he warned his people at the long, curved sand-dunes__ while many warners have passed before him and after him (with the same message)__saying, "Do not worship anyone except Allah. Surely I fear for you the punishment of a terrible day. [21] They said, "Have you come to make us deviate from our gods. So bring us that with which you are threatening us, if you are truthful." [22] He said, "The knowledge is with Allah alone, and I am conveying to you what I am sent with, but I see that you are a people who behave ignorantly." [23] So, when they saw *it, in the form of a cloud* proceeding towards their valleys, they said, "This is a cloud that will bring us rain." No, it is what you asked to come soon__ a wind in which there is a painful punishment, [24] that will destroy every thing with the command of its Lord! So they became such that nothing remained to be seen except their dwelling places. This is how We punish the guilty people. [25] And indeed We had established them in a powerful position in which We did not establish you, and had given to them ears and eyes and hearts, but neither their ears availed them in the least, nor their eyes, nor their hearts, as they used to reject Allah's signs; and they were encircled by what they

used to ridicule. [26] **And We have (also) destroyed (other) towns around you**{1} **while We had given to them a variety of signs, so that they might return (from disbelief).** [27] **So, why were they not helped by those whom they had taken as gods, instead of Allah, to achieve closeness (to Him)? Instead, they vanished from them. And (in fact) it was their lie and something they used to forge.** [28]

Commentary

These verses are to remind the infidels of the severe punishments faced by earlier people who rejected the messengers sent to them. Special reference is made to 'Ād, the people of Sayyidnā Hūd عليه السلام who has been described as their 'brother', firstly because he belonged to their tribe, and secondly because he was their well-wisher as a brother. Since this nation lived in valleys surrounded by long, curved sand dunes, called in Arabic *'Aḥqāf'*, special reference is made to these dunes, so that one could find out their places, if he so wishes when traveling to their localities. It is mentioned in verse 22 that they themselves demanded Allah's punishment to be brought upon them. Then verse 24 states that the punishment was sent to them in the form of a cloud that appeared to be benign, and therefore they were happy to see it in the hope that it would bring rain to them, but in fact it contained the divine punishment in the form of a violent wind that destroyed every thing, leaving nothing except their empty homes that remained as a sign for those who might learn a lesson. The detailed account of the story of 'Ād and Thamūd has already been given in Sūrah Hud (11:50) for which volume 4, page 643 of this book may be consulted. Mention of these events in these verses is in the form of a brief reference, and in verse 26 the infidels of Makkah are reminded that those nations were much more powerful and well-established than the people of Makkah. Still, their power and strength was of no use to them against Allah's punishment. Moreover, verse 28 points out that the false gods believed by them to be their patrons could not save them from the torment they faced, because they were coined only by their false imagination, having no real existence at all.

{1} The reference here is to the towns of Thamūd and the people of Sayyidnā Lūṭ عليه السلام that were in the way of the people of Arabia while they travelled to Syria. The people of 'Ād were in Yemen, towards South from Makkah, while the towns of Thamūd and those of Sayyidnā Lūṭ عليه السلام were towards North, hence the words, "around you"

Verses 29 - 32

وَإِذْ صَرَفْنَآ إِلَيْكَ نَفَرًا مِّنَ الْجِنِّ يَسْتَمِعُونَ الْقُرْاٰنَ ۚ فَلَمَّا حَضَرُوهُ
قَالُوٓا أَنصِتُوا ۖ فَلَمَّا قُضِيَ وَلَّوْا إِلَىٰ قَوْمِهِم مُّنذِرِينَ ﴿٢٩﴾ قَالُوا
يَٰقَوْمَنَآ إِنَّا سَمِعْنَا كِتَٰبًا أُنزِلَ مِنۢ بَعْدِ مُوسَىٰ مُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ
يَهْدِيٓ إِلَى الْحَقِّ وَإِلَىٰ طَرِيقٍ مُّسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿٣٠﴾ يَٰقَوْمَنَآ أَجِيبُوا دَاعِيَ
اللَّهِ وَاٰمِنُوا بِهِۦ يَغْفِرْ لَكُم مِّن ذُنُوبِكُمْ وَيُجِرْكُم مِّنْ عَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ
﴿٣١﴾ وَمَن لَّا يُجِبْ دَاعِيَ اللَّهِ فَلَيْسَ بِمُعْجِزٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَيْسَ
لَهُۥ مِن دُونِهِۦٓ أَوْلِيَآءُ ۚ أُولَٰٓئِكَ فِي ضَلَٰلٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿٢٨﴾

And (recall) when We directed a group of Jinns towards you, who started listening to the Qur'ān. So, when they attended it, they said (to each other), "Keep quiet." Then once it was over, they went back to their people as warners. [29] **They said, "O our people, we have heard a book sent down after Mūsā, confirming what was before it, which guides to the truth and to a straight path.** [30] **O our people, respond to Allah's herald, and believe in him, and (once you do that,) Allah will forgive your sins for you, and will save you from a painful punishment.** [31] **And the one who does not respond to Allah's herald is not (able) to frustrate (Allah by escaping) in the land, and for him there are no supporters besides Him. Such people are in open error."** [32]

Commentary

The previous verses have condemned the infidelity and the arrogant attitude of the infidels and its destructive results. In these verses, the people of Makkah are being put to shame by telling them that even jinn, who are even more proud and haughty than you, had their hearts softened after hearing the Qur'ān, and they became Muslims; Allah has given the humans more sense and intelligence than jinns, and despite that they do not embrace faith.

The incident of the jinn listening to the Qur'ān and then embracing faith is stated in authentic *aḥādīth*. When the Holy Prophet ﷺ was

blessed with prophethood, the jinns were stopped from listening to the news of the heavens, and if a jinn ventured to go upwards to overhear the heavenly news, was chased away by a meteor directed towards him.

The jinns consulted each other to find out the cause of this new phenomenon that has stopped them from listening to the news from the heavens. They believed that some new event happening in the world may have been the cause. In order to discover that event, various groups of jinns spread out in different parts of the world to investigate this phenomenon. One of the groups reached Ḥijāz also when the Holy Prophet ﷺ along with some of his companions was present at a place called Baṭn Nakhlah and was intending to go to the fair of 'Ukāẓ'. (Arabs used to setup trade-fairs on special days in various places for commercial and social purposes where people of all areas used to assemble, set up shops and arrange meetings and social gatherings much like the exhibitions of our days. One such fair used to be set up in 'Ukāẓ where the Holy Prophet ﷺ was intending to go probably for preaching and calling towards Islam.) The Holy Prophet ﷺ was leading the morning prayers in Baṭn nakhlah when the jinns reached there. After hearing the Qur'ān, they exclaimed that this was that new matter which has come between them and the heavenly news. (Aḥmad, Bukhārī, Muslim, Tirmidhī, Nasa'ī, etc., with the authority of Ibn 'Abbās)

According to another narration, when the jinns came there, they directed each other to keep quiet and listen to the Qur'ān. When the Holy Prophet ﷺ finished his prayers, they put their belief in Islam, embraced it, went back to their people and informed them of the real cause of the new phenomenon. They also told their people that they had become Muslims and advised them that they should also embrace the faith. But the Holy Prophet ﷺ did not become aware of the jinns coming and going and of their embracing the faith after listening to the Qur'ān until Sūrah jinn was revealed wherein he was informed of this incident. (Ibn-ul-Mundhir quoting 'Abdul Mālik)

Another narration states that these jinns were inhabitants of Naṣībīn, either seven or nine in number. When they told their nation about it and motivated them to embrace faith, three hundred of them presented themselves for embracing Islam. (Abū Nu'aim, Al-Wāqidī, quoting Ka'b al-Aḥbār, as in Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī). There are diverse narrations in other *aḥādīth* also, but

since they are about various incidents at different times, there is no contradiction between them. That these are different incidents is supported by a statement of Ibn 'Abbās reported by Ṭabarānī in Awsaṭ and by Ibn Marduwaih that the jinns came to the Holy Prophet ﷺ many times.

Khafājī has said that the cumulative outcome of various *aḥādīth* is that jinn presented themselves to the Holy Prophet ﷺ six times for benefiting from his teachings. (Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī and Bayān-ul-Qur'ān)

كِتٰبًا اُنْزِلَ مِنْۢ بَعْدِ مُوْسٰى (a book sent down after Mūsā). Here the words 'after Mūsā have been taken by some exegetes to indicate that these jinns were Jews, because Injīl that was revealed to Sayyidnā 'Īsā عليه السلام, after Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام, has not been mentioned. But there is no clear narration to support this inference. That they did not refer to Injīl cannot be a sufficient proof for the jinns being Jews. Another reason for not mentioning Injīl may be that Injīl follows Torah in most commandments, and the Qur'ān, like Torah, is an independent Book, having different commands, rules and regulations. It is likely that the underlying idea was to state that the Qur'ān is the Book which is independent like Torah.

يَغْفِرْلَكُمْ مِّنْ ذُنُوْبِكُمْ (will forgive your sins for you,) The word '*min*' used in the text gives the sense of 'some'. If it is taken in this sense here, it would mean that 'some sins' will be forgiven by embracing Islam. It will indicate that only sins relating to the rights of Allah would be forgiven but not the rights of people. But some exegetes have taken '*min*' in this verse as an extra word that has no additional meaning in Arabic idioms. Given this interpretation, no explanation is required.

Verses 33 - 35

اَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا اَنَّ اللّٰهَ الَّذِىْ خَلَقَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضَ وَلَمْ يَعْىَ بِخَلْقِهِنَّ
بِقٰدِرٍ عَلٰٓى اَنْ يُّحْيِۦَ الْمَوْتٰى ۭ بَلٰٓى اِنَّهٗ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَىْءٍ قَدِيْرٌ ﴿۳۳﴾
وَيَوْمَ يُعْرَضُ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا عَلَى النَّارِ ۭ اَلَيْسَ هٰذَا بِالْحَقِّ ۭ قَالُوْا بَلٰى
وَرَبِّنَا ۭ قَالَ فَذُوْقُوا الْعَذَابَ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْفُرُوْنَ ﴿۳۴﴾ فَاصْبِرْ كَمَا

صَبَرَ اُولُوا الْعَزْمِ مِنَ الرُّسُلِ وَلَا تَسْتَعْجِلْ لَّهُمْ ؕ كَاَنَّهُمْ يَوْمَ يَرَوْنَ
مَا يُوْعَدُوْنَ ۙ لَمْ يَلْبَثُوْٓا اِلَّا سَاعَةً مِّنْ نَّهَارٍ ؕ بَلٰغٌ ۚ فَهَلْ يُهْلَكُ اِلَّا
الْقَوْمُ الْفٰسِقُوْنَ ﴿۳۵﴾

Have they not seen that Allah who has created the heavens and the earth, and was not wearied by their creation, does have power to give life to the dead? Yes of course, He is powerful to do every thing. [33] **And the day the disbelievers will be presented to the Fire, (it will be said to them,) "Is this not true?" They will say, "Yes, Our Lord!" He will say, "Then taste the punishment, for you used to disbelieve."** [34] **So, (O prophet,) observe patience, as the resolute messengers observed patience, and be not in haste about them. The Day they will see what they are promised, (it will be) as if they did not stay (in the world) more than an hour in a single day. This is a message. So, none will be destroyed except the sinners.** [35]

Commentary

اُولُوا الْعَزْمِ مِنَ الرُّسُلِ (...as the resolute messengers observed patience - 46:35). The word 'resolute' has been used here as a qualification for all the messengers, and not only for some of them, because the word *'min'* used with *'rusūl'* is not, according to the authentic exegetes, in the sense of 'some'. It is rather for 'Bayān' (description), to use the grammatical term. The sense is that all messengers are resolute people. Of course, variation in the grades of qualities between messengers is proved from the Holy Qur'ān itself:

تِلْكَ الرُّسُلُ فَضَّلْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ عَلٰى بَعْضٍ

Those are the messengers some of whom We have given excellence over some others (2:253)

Therefore those prophets who excel other prophets in the quality of being resolute and courageous have been given this title in a special way, although there are differences of opinion as to who they are. Majority opinion is that this special title is given to those prophets who have been mentioned in the following verse of Sūrah Al-Ahzab verse 7:

وَاِذْ اَخَذْنَا مِنَ النَّبِيّٖنَ مِيْثَاقَهُمْ وَمِنْكَ وَمِنْ نُّوْحٍ وَّاِبْرٰهِيْمَ وَمُوْسٰى وَعِيْسَى ابْنِ مَرْيَمَ

> And (recall) when We took from the prophets their covenant, and from you and from Nūḥ and Ibrāhīm and Mūsā and 'Īsā, the son of Maryam. And We did take from them a firm covenant, (33:7)

Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضی اللہ عنہا states that the Holy Prophet ﷺ has said "The delights, luxuries and pleasures of this world do not befit Muḥammad ﷺ and his family, because Allah Ta'ālā does not accept anything less than patience from those who are 'resolute', and I have received this divine order: فَاصْبِرْ كَمَا صَبَرَ أُولُوا الْعَزْمِ مِنَ الرُّسُلِ"So, O prophet, observe patience, as the resolute messengers observed patience. (46:35)"

Alḥamdulillāh
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Aḥkāf (The Sand-dunes)
Ends here

A

B

C

E

F

J

K

L